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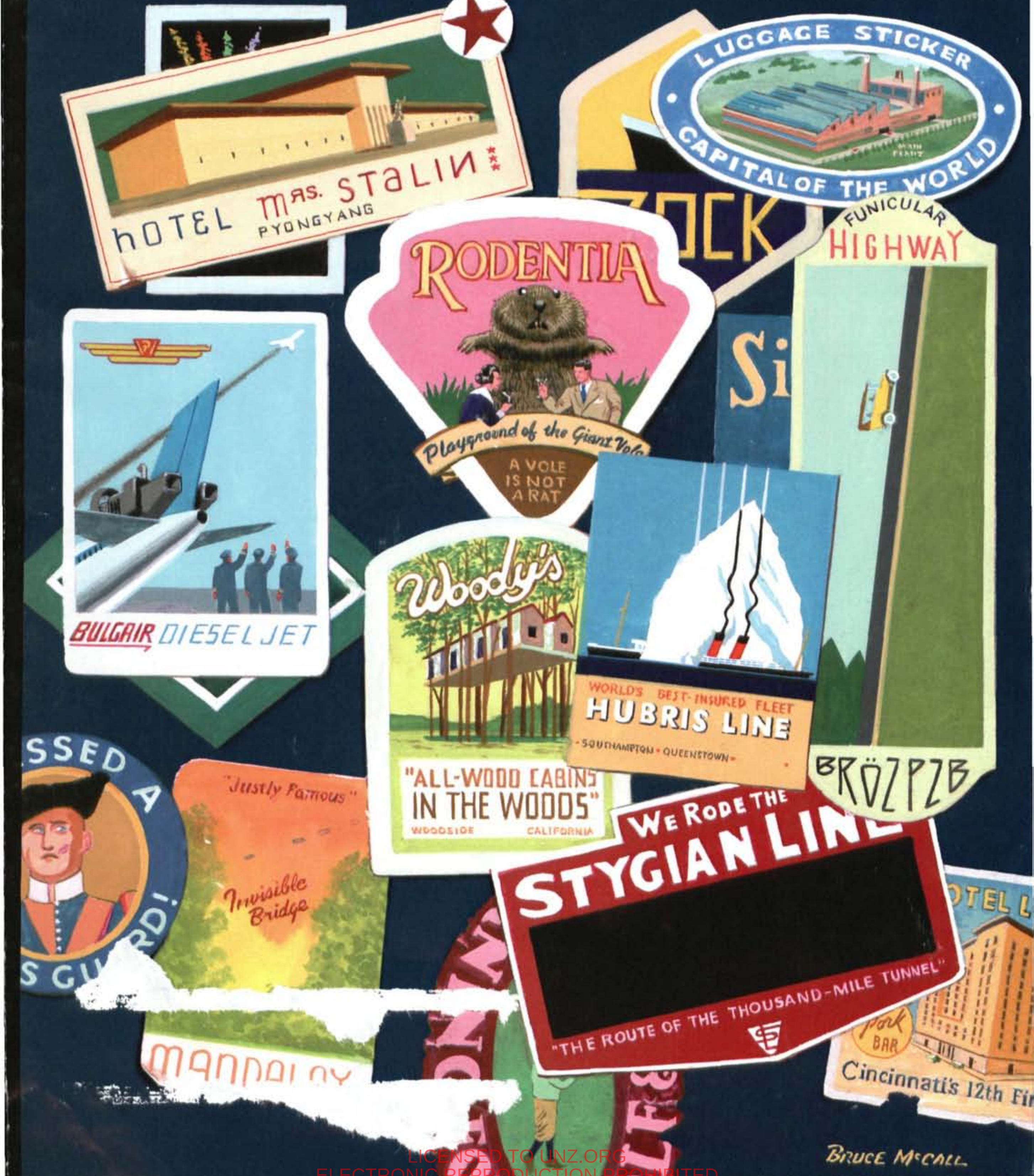
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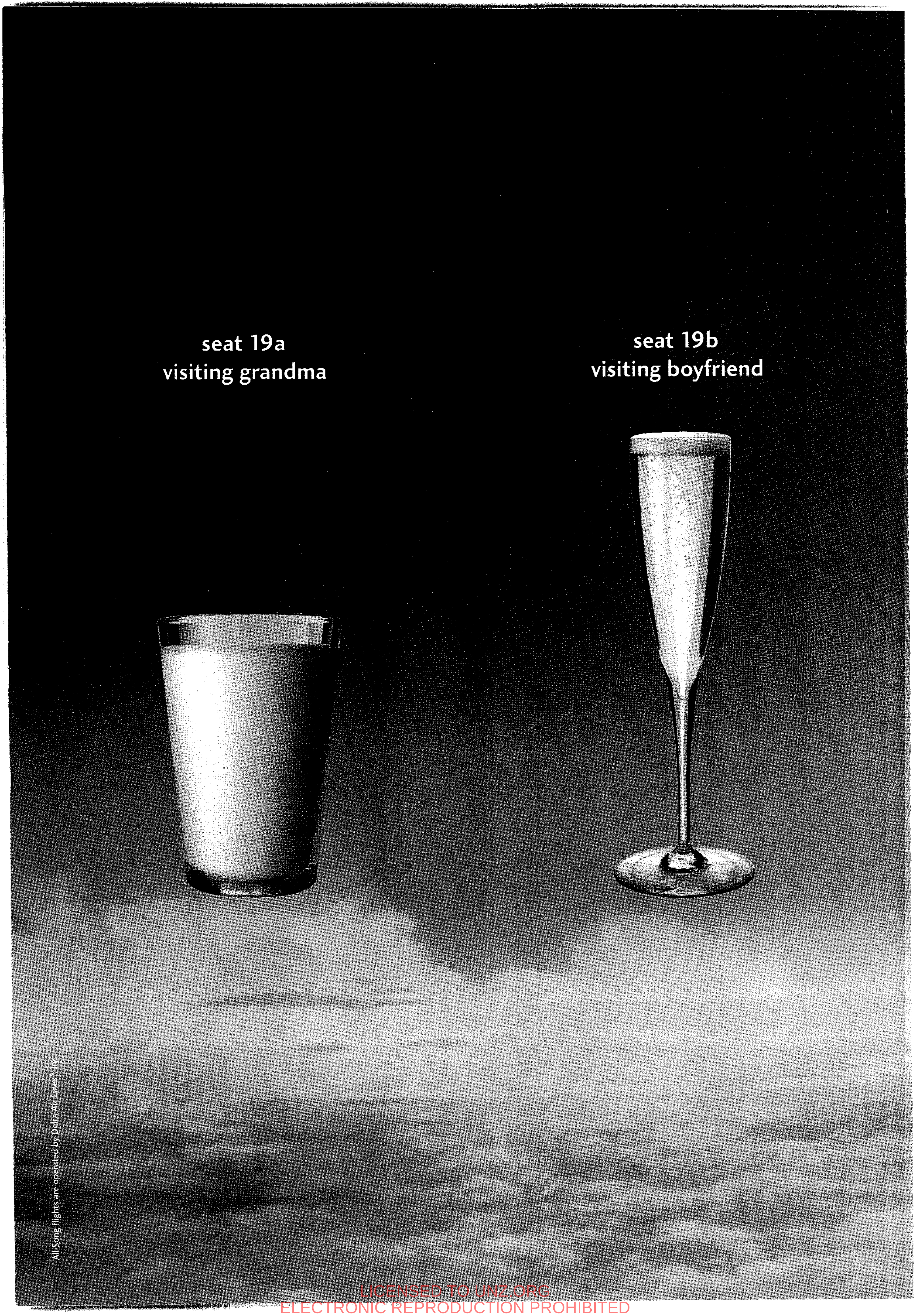
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SEA AND LAND

BY JONATHAN LOWY

Author of "The Temple of Music" and "Elvis and Nixon."

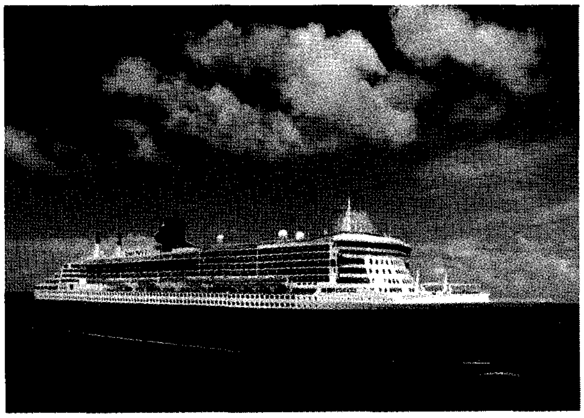
Part three in a series. In previous installments, we found the narrator, his wife, and his mother, Greta, aboard Queen Mary 2. During their voyage, they charted a course through time to days of love and war when Greta met the narrator's father, a German scientist escaping to America.

The sun emerged from the ocean; land beyond our vocabulary; only wind and sea on this floating refuge. That was the image before us on the deck, that is what I take with me.

We kept odd hours, Dianna and I, after that first night on Queen Mary 2, when I learned who my father was. He had left his country to fight his country—history had called him—and then he had vanished. And now here we were, what remained of our family: adrift at sea.

I would wake in the afternoon with a swim; I lifted weights, ran, then took in a massage. The sun was sinking by the time we thought to dress for the day, the evening. I felt fit, strong; I tried not to think. Variety was the thing: a different deck of the ship; a new whisky; champagne; flavored cordials. *Linguine fruitti di mare* one night; *poule au pot* the next. The captain sent a bottle of '61 Lafite to our table; we told the chef to improvise a feast, to tell us afterwards what we had eaten. There was a French couple we palled with; some Brits joined in; my mother befriended some Germans. We had fun. Someone said he knew me (from a newspaper photo at the White House; I saw the snarls) but it was all right. We were reinventing ourselves in this natant city, this nationless world.

Then a show, some raucous turns on the dance floor. We threw money at blackjack tables, at roulette. We locked ourselves behind cabin doors at night, then woke to watch the sunrise, our balcony door left open to welcome the salty breeze.



Let's never get off.

We shunned television and telephones, signals from the encroaching world.

Each morning, still, I affixed my flag pin on my lapel. Dianna shook her head at it, seemingly incongruous with my new air.

One night an older gentleman joined my mother at our table. He had traveled Queen Mary, he told us, as a soldier, when Cunard traded in luxury for the war effort, suites for barracks. Churchill himself was aboard, charting maneuvers. My mother's companion recounted the rich history of the cruiseline until ghosts appeared before us: dukes and duchesses; movie stars long since faded. And in an earlier age, immigrants in the steerage holds. Somewhere in that diaphanous mist still danced my father and mother, before they reached shore and lost each other.

I looked at my mother, mesmerized by her new comrade, and there was love (it's never too late for that); we were on deck now: a table by candlelight, the musical rocking of the waves.

And I looked at Dianna: we were there too, tangled in webs of history. What would be our story, looking back?

Then, finally, there was talk of birds. We had forgotten there was earth, another way to live. The absurd cacophony of cell phone orchestras. The news' daily tragedies: wartime; lies.

We packed our bags and Dianna handed me my American passport. I looked down at it, then back at her. (Our vacation seemed impossibly quick now, over before it began, once land began crashing back towards us.) In Dianna's eyes were so many lingering questions.

Things I vowed to myself then: I would not be defined by my country, I would chart my own course; I would stay true to love, I would find my better self.

I looked deeply at her, Dianna, my wife; I tried, unsuccessfully, not to cry. I clenched her hand, clenched it hard.

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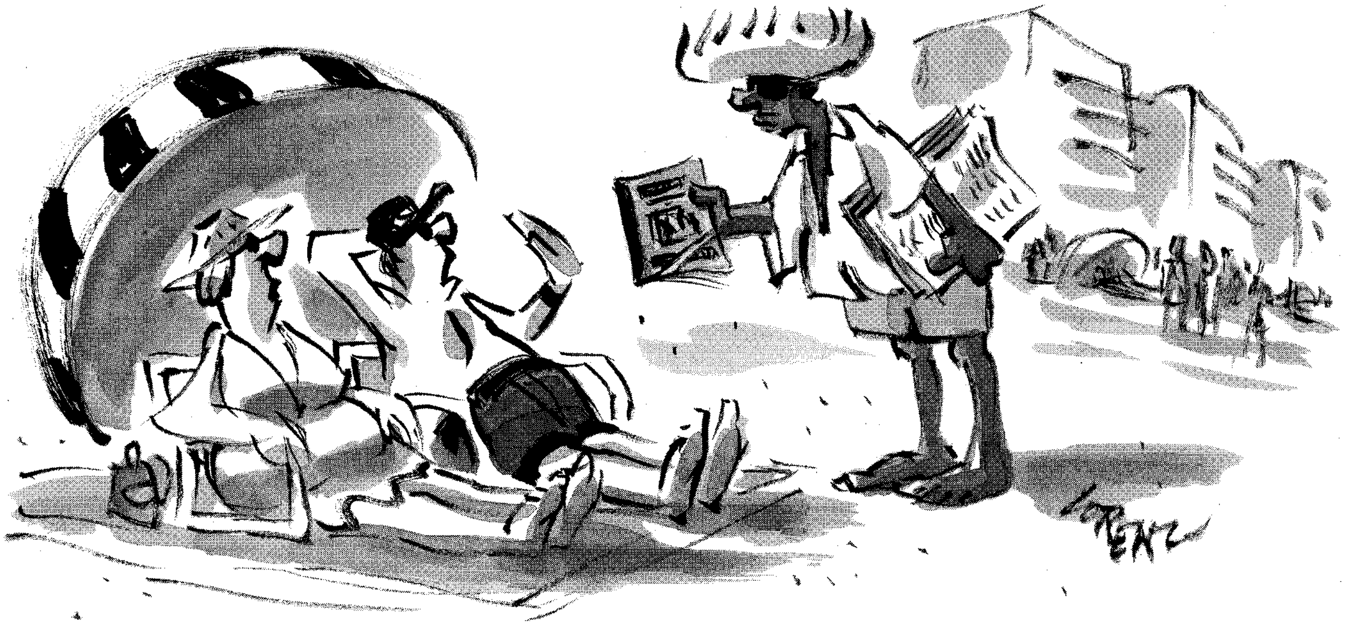

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CONTRIBUTORS

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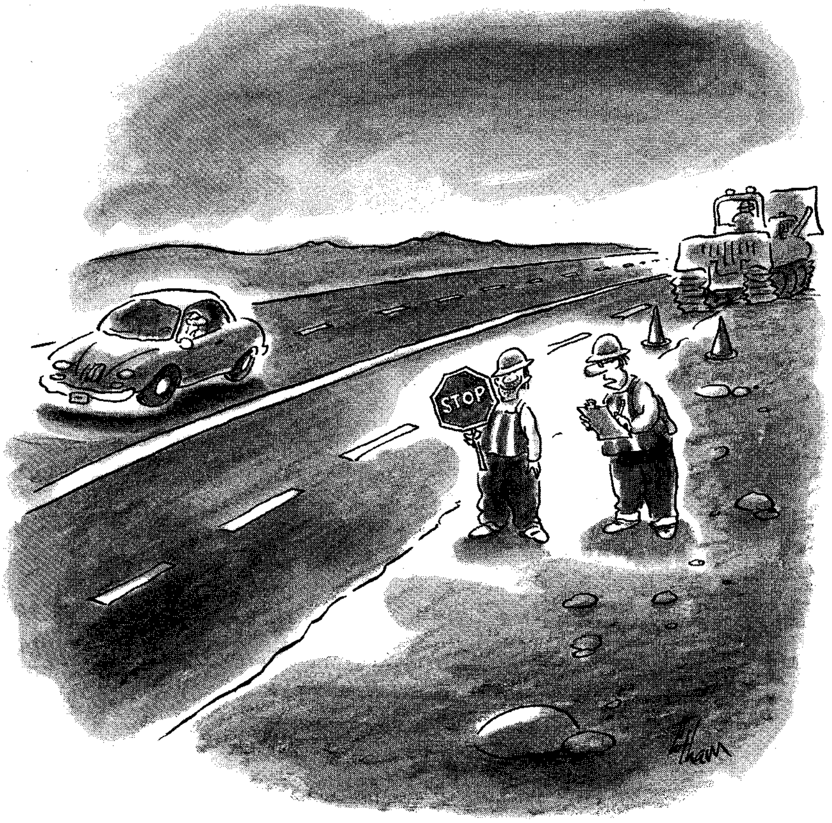

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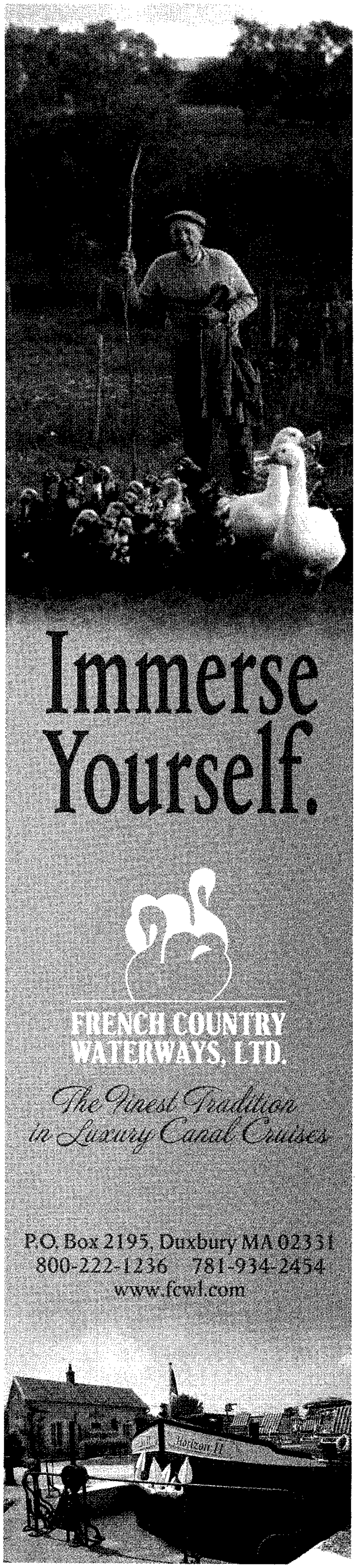
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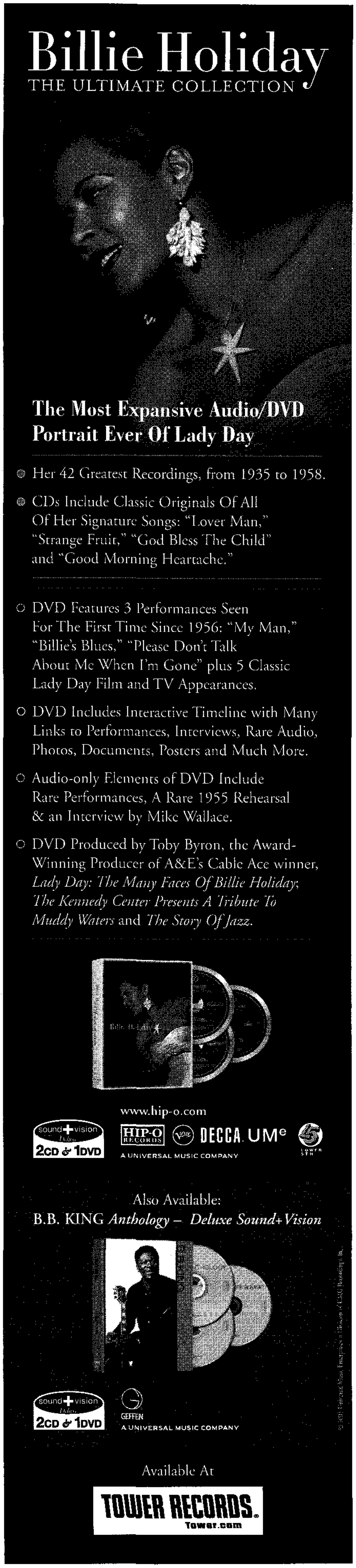

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Steven Shapin (Books, p. 191) is Franklin L. Ford Professor of the History of Science at Harvard. He is completing work on a book called "Science as a Vocation: Personal Virtue and Scientific Authority in Late Modernity."

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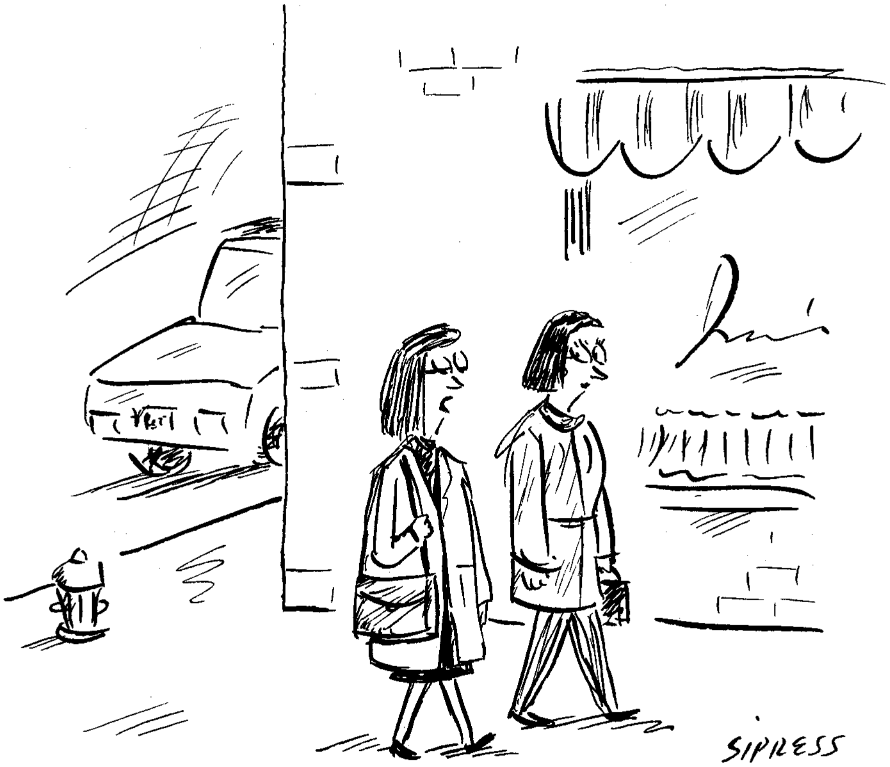
Roz Chast (The Back Page, p. 206) is a regular contributor. Her latest book is "The Party, After You Left." ♦



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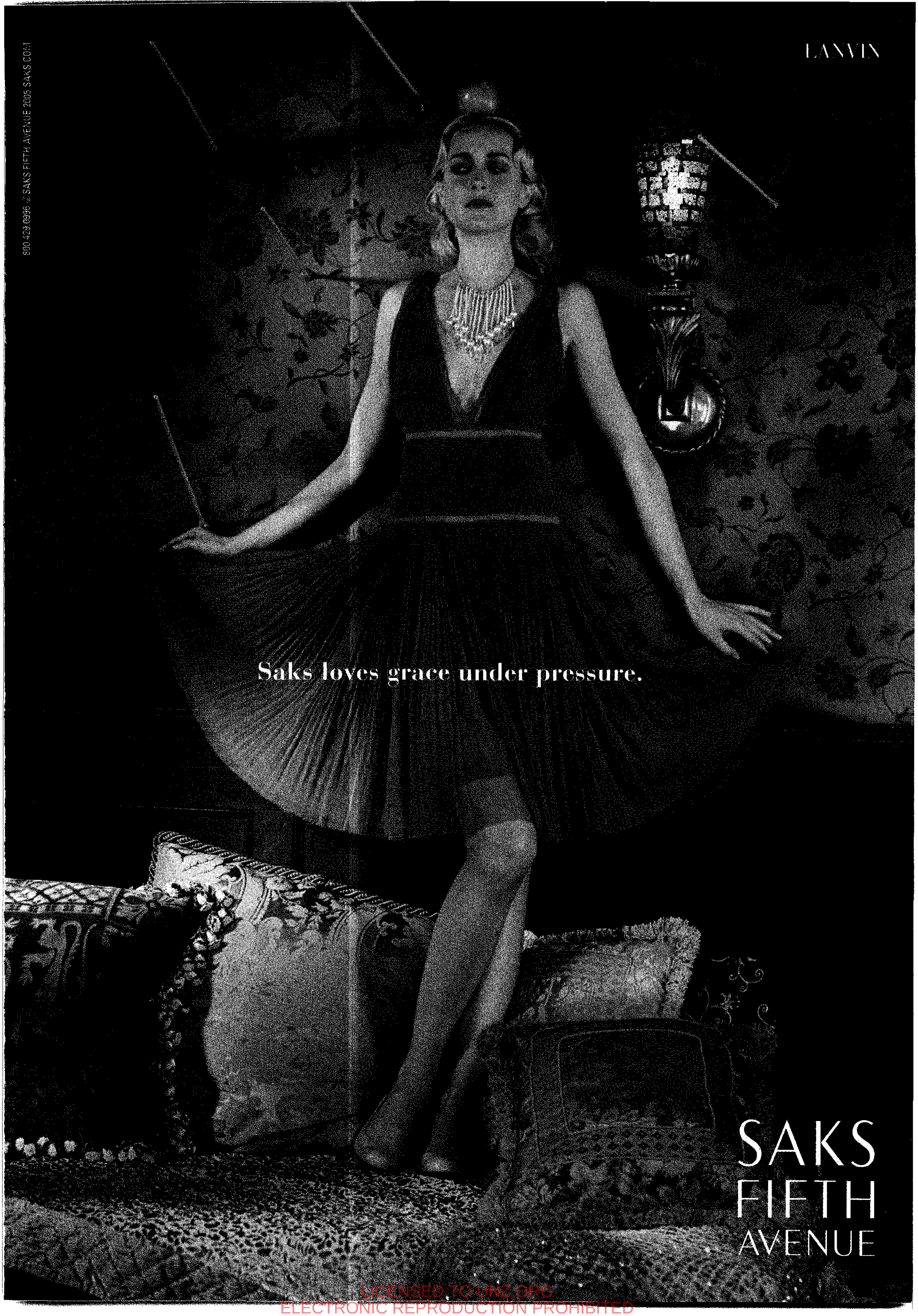
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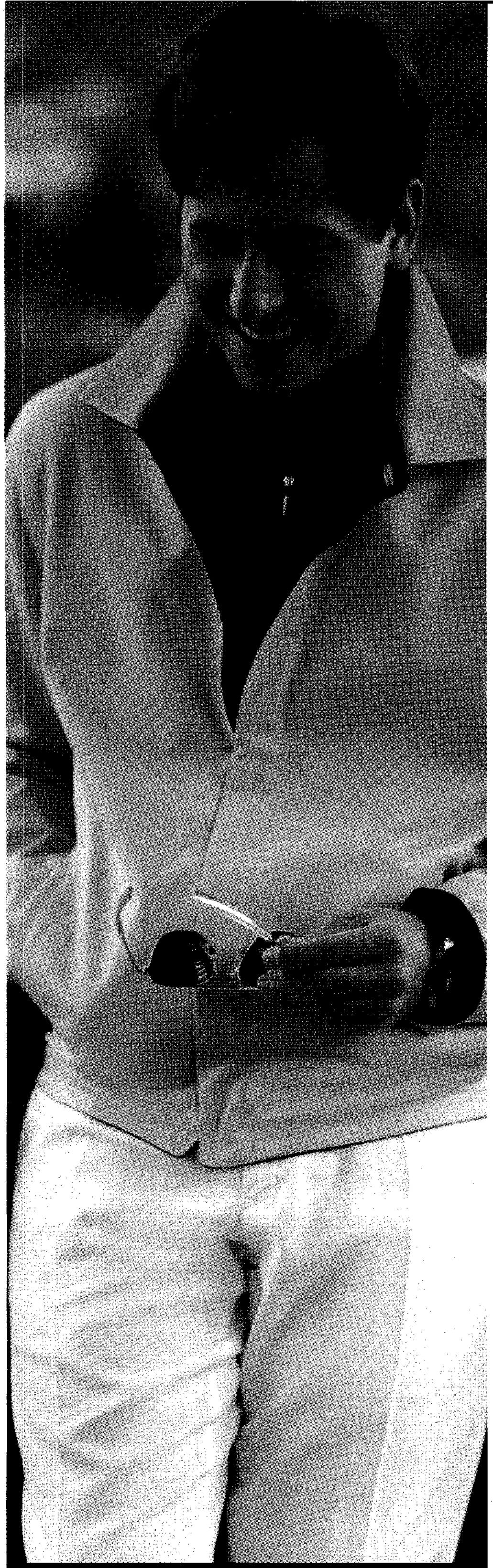
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THE TROUBLE WITH DEMS

Jeffrey Goldberg's account of the Democratic Party's confusion since the last Presidential election touches on a crucial reason for John Kerry's defeat ("The Unbranding," March 21st). Democrats consistently focussed on explanations of policy, while Bush and his followers conveyed their sense of moral superiority and their toughness, which appealed to voters' emotions. Kerry didn't appear as angry, as self-confident, and as connected to his feelings as Bush did, and, speaking to Goldberg, he now seems to recognize this: "I presented stronger arguments, but there was a visceral unwillingness to change." The rest of the Democratic Party needs to wake up to the fact that they will continue to lose elections until they learn how to appeal to voters' gut feelings.
David C. Balderston
New York City

In chronicling the Democrats' attempts to arrive at a plausible foreign policy, Goldberg highlights such "national-security Democrats" as Joseph Lieberman, Joseph Biden, and Hillary Clinton, who believe that the Iraq war's "stated rationale—Saddam's brutality and his flouting of United Nations resolutions—was ideologically and morally sound." But, of course, the Iraq war was also sold on the much more specific grounds of weapons of mass destruction, mushroom clouds, and imminent threats, all of which turned out to be illusory. If Democrats want to be perceived again as having a "firm" and "muscular" foreign policy, the first step must be the formulation of a clear alternative to what the Bush Administration offers. This cannot be accomplished by self-destructive railing against "antiwar" Democrats like Howard Dean or supporters of MoveOn.org. Rather, it requires taking the multilateral liberal internationalism with which the Democratic Party was so strongly identified in the twentieth century and adapting it to present circumstances.
David Karnes
Los Angeles, Calif.

Goldberg's conversations with a range of prominent Democrats illustrate a great weakness in the leadership of the Party. During the run-up to the election, leading Democrats were unwilling to stand up for the principle that preëmptive war is unacceptable. Having given a pass to the Administration's unilateralism, they ended up floating along with its muddle of justifications: W.M.D.s, aluminum tubes, laboratories, the Al Qaeda connection, regime change, and so on. As a consequence, the Democrats failed to provide an electorate that was deeply divided over the Iraq war with any opportunity of turning the election into a referendum on the issue. The snapshot that Goldberg's piece affords of those now jostling for the next Democratic nomination seems to promise more of the same for 2008.
William H. Izlar, Jr.
Atlanta, Ga.

If Senator Joseph Biden is considering a Presidential bid in 2008, as seems likely from Goldberg's article, he will have to be careful of the new importance of the Catholic right in Presidential politics. In last year's race, many Catholic groups aggressively campaigned against Kerry, a Catholic, because of his positions on abortion, gay marriage, and stem-cell research. At the expense of broader issues, they found a few sympathetic bishops to level strident criticisms of a co-religionist who failed to toe the line on pro-life issues, and they obtained a lot of media coverage for their cause. Should Senator Biden, also a Catholic, choose to run, he will have to be prepared to defend himself from fellow-Catholics who will spare no effort to keep him out of the White House.
Michael W. Hovey
Detroit, Mich.

•

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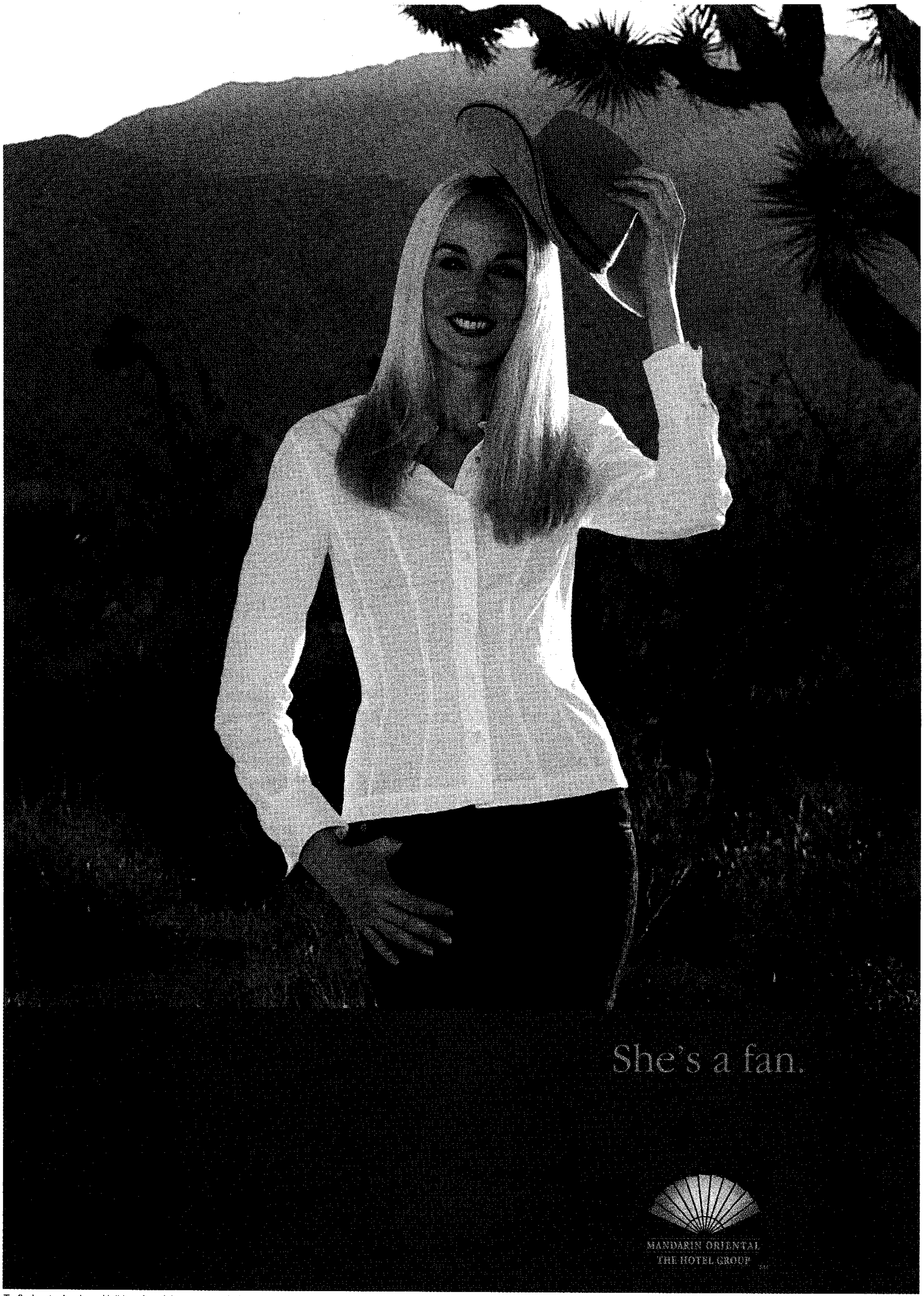
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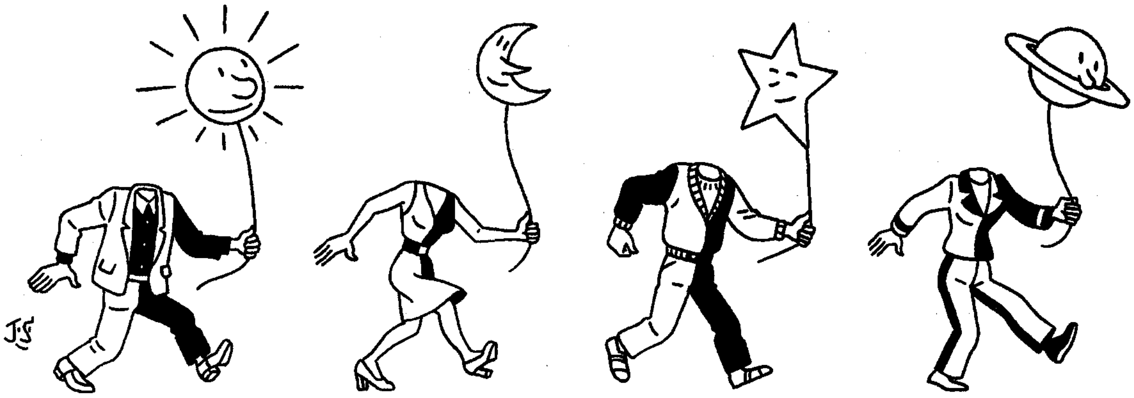

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THIS WEEK
BROWNIAN MOTION

Trisha Brown knows how to pick her collaborators—from Robert Rauschenberg and Donald Judd to Laurie Anderson and Terry Winters. The first program of her thirty-fifth-anniversary season samples her work with Rauschenberg, including their first joint effort, "Glacial Decoy" (1989), Brown's signature piece, "Set and Reset" (1983), and "Astral Convertible" (1989), which uses motion sensors. For the second program, she chose an inanimate collaborator—an innovative motion-capture system—in the new work "How Long Does the Subject Linger on the Edge of the Volume . . ." (Rose Theatre, April 13-16; see Dance.)

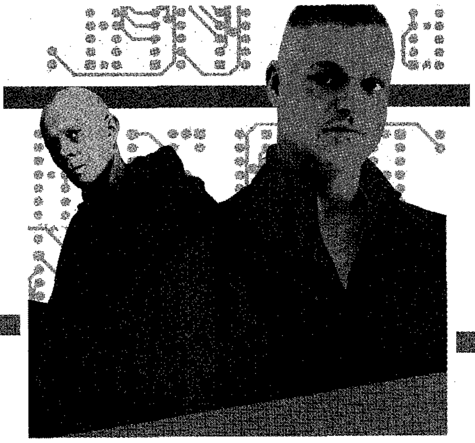
SYNTHETIC WORLD

The half-gay, all-theatrical dance-pop duo Erasure was formed in 1985 by the flamboyant singer Andy Bell and the former Depeche Mode and Yazoo keyboardist Vince Clarke. Less trenchant than the Pet Shop Boys but less flimsy than almost anyone else, Erasure has enjoyed a long, successful career, especially in their native U.K., where they have had five No. 1 albums and twenty-five Top Twenty singles. This tour, which includes ten dates at Irving Plaza and celebrates the release of "Nightbirds," is the band's first big American effort since Bell was diagnosed as H.I.V.-positive, in the late nineties. (See Night Life.)

A LITTLE NACHTMUSIQUE

In the late eighteenth century, a wind band (usually pairs of clarinets, horns, and bassoons) was the closest thing to an iPod—these handy groups could play anything from arrangements of operas and symphonies to works written expressly for the genre. Eric Hoeprich, a master of the authentic period clarinet, has gathered five friends to form Nachtmusique, who will make their New York début performing music by Beethoven, Krommer, and Mozart. (Frick Collection, April 17; see Classical Music.)

Eric Hoeprich and Nachtmusique, at the Frick Collection.



The British synth-pop band Erasure plays ten nights at Irving Plaza.

JOHN RITTER

"Glacial Decoy," by Trisha Brown and Robert Rauschenberg, at Rose Theatre.

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BEAST ON THE MOON
Omar Metwally stars in the U.S. première of a play by Richard Kalinoski, about a couple who survive the Armenian genocide and move to America. In previews. (Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 W. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE BEAUTY INSIDE
New Georges presents a new play by Catherine Filloux, about a Turkish-American lawyer in Istanbul who takes the case of a peasant girl who has survived an attempted honor killing. Previews begin April 15. Opens April 19 at 7:30. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-868-4444.)

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG
A musical based on Roald Dahl's film adaptation of the popular children's story by Ian Fleming. In previews. (Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.)

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS
Alan Alda and Liev Schreiber star in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize-winning play. Directed by Joe Mantello. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA
A musical based on Elizabeth Spencer's novella about a mother and daughter who travel through Italy in 1953. In previews. Opens April 18 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

OUTWARD BOUND
Keen Company revives Sutton Vane's 1924 drama about a fateful sea voyage. In previews. Opens April 16 at 8. (Urban Stages, 259 W. 30th St. 212-868-4444.)

A PICASSO
John Tillinger directs a new play by Jeffrey Hatcher, set during the German occupation of Paris, about an imagined confrontation between Picasso and an interrogator over confiscated art works. In previews. Opens April 19 at 6:45. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

PRIVILEGE
A new dark comedy by Paul Weitz, about the social fallout two teenagers suffer when their father is convicted of insider trading. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

SLAG HEAP
Anton Dudley's new play, set in Manchester, England, chronicles the misadventures of demoralized post-Thatcher-era youth. Opens April 13 at 7:30. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

SOULS OF NAPLES
The New York première of a comedy by Eduardo De Filippo (translated by Michael Feingold), set in crumbling post-war Italy, stars John Turturro. One preview on April 13. Opens April 14 at 7. (Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE
Natasha Richardson stars in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of the Tennessee Williams play. Edward Hall directs. In previews. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

SWEET CHARITY
A revival of the cheeky musical from 1966 about a good-hearted hooker (modelled on the heroine of Fellini's "Nights of Cabiria") stars Christina Applegate. Directed by Walter Bobbie. In previews. (Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin's satisfying musical comedy moves to Broadway. Previews begin April 15. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING
The sharp-witted trio of British chanteuses known as Fascinating Aïda—Adele Anderson, Dillie Keane, and Liza Pulman—unleash their new show. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

"Beast on the Moon," a new play about Armenian immigrants.

JASHAR AWAN

ALL SHOOK UP
From his pompadoured locks to his blue suède shoes, Cheyenne Jackson is a hunk, a hunk of burnin' love, with bulging cartoon biceps and mighty lungs. Sharon Wilkins, as a love-struck barkeep, offers gospel-tinged rock balladeering. But this soulless new show, whose factitious plot is built on the King's songbook, constitutes final proof that Elvis is dead. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

BRITS OFF BROADWAY
Eleven shows première in this year's festival, which runs through July. Up first are "Deco Diva," about the artist Tamara de Lempicka, and "When the Bulbul Stops Singing," drawn from the memoirs of a Palestinian poet and lawyer. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-239-6200. Through April 24.)

CALIGULA
The Classical Theatre of Harlem presents a new play about the notorious Roman dictator. (H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444. Through April 24.)

CHINA DOLL
A theatrical tribute to the Asian-American actress Anna May Wong (on the centenary of her birth) stars Rosanne Ma. Directed by Tisa Chang. (West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St. 212-279-4200.)

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS
A gleeful translation of the film to the musical stage, with a good-natured score by David Yazbek and a comic engine revved by Jeffrey Lane's perky book. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/14/05.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DOUBT
Cherry Jones stars in John Patrick Shanley's well-told tale about possible sexual abuse in a Catholic school. Doug Hughes directs. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

ELEKTRA
Poland's avant-garde Gardzienice theatre company presents its adaptation of the Euripides play, which includes singing and stylized movement. (La Mama Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Through April 24.)

THE FALSE SERVANT
Martha Plimpton, Bill Buell, and Paul Lazar lead the cast in Kathleen Tolan's new translation of the Marivaux play. (Classic Stage, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

FRANKIE
An overweight New Jersey slacker is the subject of a new play by Daniel Roberts ("Brando"), directed by Alex Lippard ("Hecuba"). (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

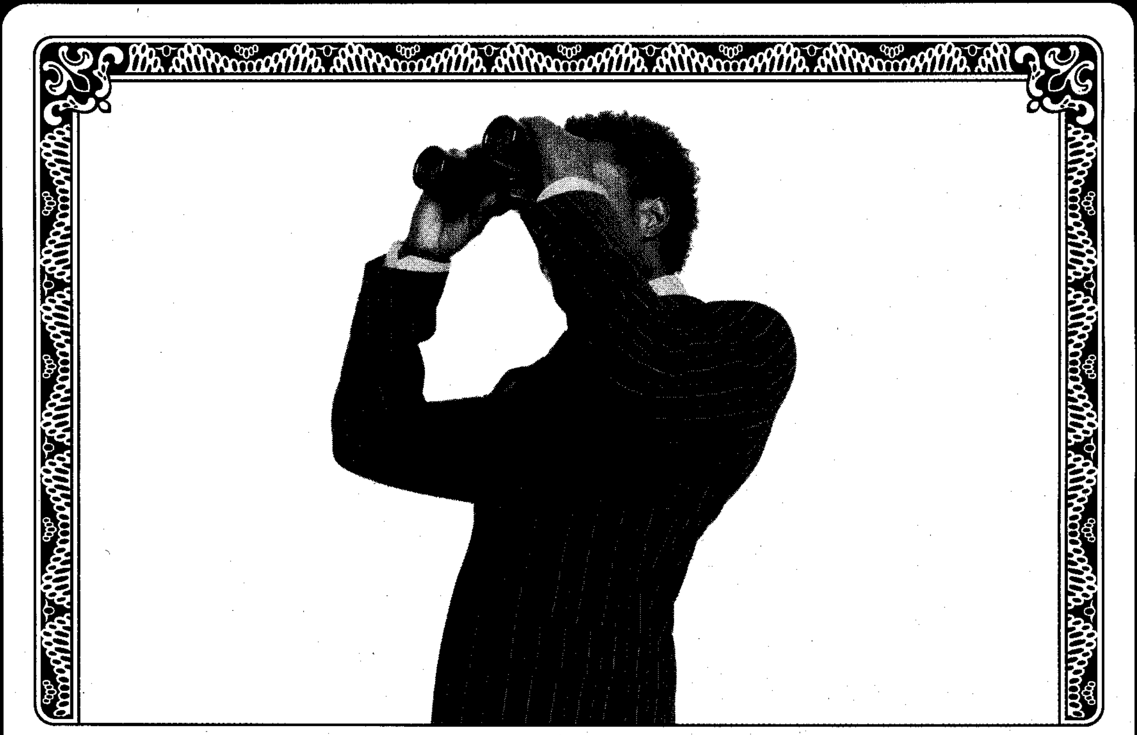
THE GLASS MENAGERIE
In David Leveaux's brilliant staging of Tennessee Williams's delicate "memory play," set in Depression-era St. Louis, Jessica Lange gives a brave and electrifying performance as the matriarch Amanda Wingfield, whose husband fled her, and whose son, Tom (Christian Slater), will soon follow suit. She uses her fine, slim body and her beautiful elocution to illustrate how hysteria can shoot through a person. How to explain Slater's hunky, shambling hero? He proves that he's more than willing to bend his stocky, powerful body to the steel of Williams's breathtaking cadences and runaway-train humor. (4/4/05) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

GOING TO ST. IVES
In a quiet English cottage, a prim and proper eye surgeon (Vivienne Benesch) pours tea for an exotic guest, May N'Kame (L. Scott Caldwell), the mother of an Idi Amin-like African dictator. The two women hatch a plan to end the dictator's reign of terror and free political hostages. Lee Blessing's tortuous plot is overburdened with machinations but has moments of lucid power. Caldwell gives a remarkable performance as a woman whose maternal feeling has turned icy with time, but whose heart remains anguished by the choice she must make. Directed by Maria Mileaf, for Primary Stages. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE GRAND DUKE
Blue Hill Troupe's revival of this rarely performed Gilbert and Sullivan operetta (the fourteenth and last they wrote together) takes place at the Teatro Heckscher of El Museo del Barrio—where the show had its U.S. première, in 1937. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 212-988-2012. Through April 16.)

HOT 'N' THROBBING
The final show of the Signature Theatre Company's Paula Vogel season explores the continuum between sex and violence. Charlene (the excellent Lisa Emery) is a single mom who writes erotic fiction. As she types her new screenplay, its seedy characters materialize in her living room alongside her two teenagers. The play begins on a comic note, but the tone darkens when Charlene's abusive ex-husband, Clyde (Elias Koteas), smashes down the door. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

INDEX TO IDIOMS
In Deb Margolin's first new solo piece in four years, a mother turns her son's English home-



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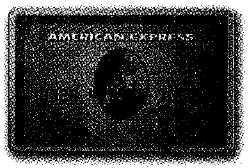

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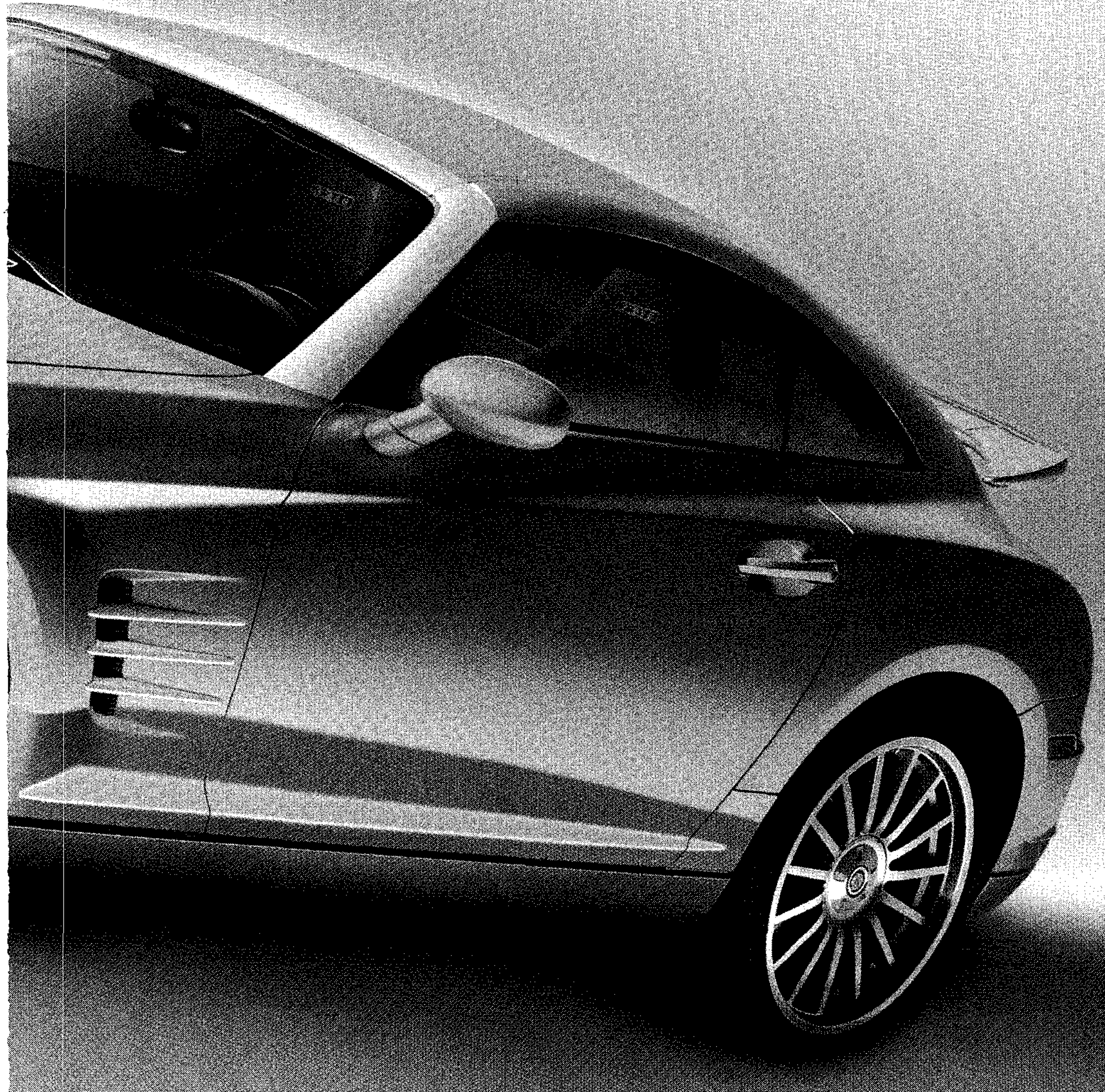

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work into fuel for a lyric memoir. Directed by Merri Milwe. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

JULIUS CAESAR
By agreeing to portray Brutus in Daniel Sullivan's staging of Shakespeare's play, the Academy Award-winning actor Denzel Washington has done Broadway a great service: he has drawn black audiences into the theatre. Regrettably, though, Washington has not managed to become Brutus. Instead, he has turned Brutus into a version of himself. The other actors here seem to be focussed less on investigating the play's meaning than on competing with Washington for their star turn. (You can feel them shrinking whenever he walks onstage.) Jessica Hecht, as Portia, is an anomaly: she reminds us what Shakespeare can do for the right performer and what he continues to give the world: a diagram of the soul, and the language to describe it. (4/11/05) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

LAZER VAUDEVILLE
The Houseman Theatre's farewell production—the building will be demolished in May—is an evening of glow-in-the-dark juggling acts and rope tricks performed by three aces. The acrobat Nicholas Flair, the hoop roller Carter Brown, and the juggler Cindy Marvell attempt stunts that leave zero margin for error (e.g., juggling a chain saw). Sight gags and a catchy soundtrack move things along, but it's the performers' obvious enjoyment of their craft that lends the show its distinctive, old-fashioned charm. (450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

MONK
Rome Neal channels the jazz giant Thelonious Monk in Laurence Holder's play. Music by Bill Lee. (Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex, 312 W. 36th St. 718-288-8048.)

MOONLIGHT AND MAGNOLIAS
A new play by Ron Hutchinson, set in 1939, revisits the tensions that raged during the writing of the screenplay for "Gone with the Wind." (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

ON GOLDEN POND
James Earl Jones and Leslie Uggams play Norman and Ethel Thayer in a revival of Ernest Thompson's play about a family reunion at a cabin in Maine. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

ORANGE FLOWER WATER
A new play by Craig Wright (who writes for "Six Feet Under") is set in and around a bed, and tracks the collapse of two marriages. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave. 212-868-4444.)

THE PILLOWMAN
In a drama by the Irish playwright Martin McDonagh, an official interrogates an author who writes disturbing stories about children. With Jeff Goldblum and Billy Crudup. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SIDES: THE FEAR IS REAL
A comic hit from last year's New York International Fringe Festival reveals actors' audition nightmares. A production of Mr. Miyagi's Theatre Company. Directed by Anne Kauffman. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

STEEL MAGNOLIAS
In 1987, when this play first opened Off Broadway, an extreme makeover meant a gravity-defying comb tease. That does the trick for the sassy Southern ladies in a small-town Louisiana beauty parlor, who crack wise and share heartaches while they get their hair done. The comedic scenes remain fresher than the Kleenex moments, but Jason Moore has assembled a fine cast for his revival of Robert Harling's play, including Delta Burke as the warmhearted beautician, Truvy, Christine Ebersole as a stoic society lady, Rebecca Gayheart as her feisty daughter, and Frances Sternhagen as the winsome widow, Clairee. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THIS IS HOW IT GOES
For the most part, black actors aren't paid to act; they're paid to act *black*. The playwright Neil LaBute, who likes to tear down conventional themes and approaches, probably believes he has confronted this issue in his new play, about an interracial love triangle, but he has only reacted to it. A character called Man (Ben Stiller) moves into a room on the property of a young white woman named Belinda (Amanda Peet), whom he secretly loved in high school. She has married a privileged local black man named Cody (the brilliant Jeffrey Wright). Their relationship bothers Man. At one point, Man instructs us to watch Cody beating Belinda. Wright and Peet are fantastic in the scene. Afterward, however, Man admits that the cruelty we have just witnessed may not be real. It is a great, and rare, thing to be unsettled in the theatre, and LaBute accomplishes that here. But whom are we to rely on in this work about the ever-shifting perceptions of people defined by race or gender? LaBute's gritty subject matter raises questions but leaves them unanswered; his writing lacks the introspection and compassion that would lend it a human complexion. Directed by George C. Wolfe. (4/11/05) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. Through April 24.)

TABLES FOR TWO

BLT FISH
21 W. 17th St. (212-691-8888)—On the first floor of Laurent Tourondel's latest venture, the white wainscoted walls are strung with thick rope and larded with antique rods and reels, stuffed marlin, and oars, giving it the feel of a Nantucket clam shack in August. The crowd dresses to match: as snow fell outside one night, three young women stripped down to tank tops to show off their winter tans, a dashing, sea-weathered man with salt-and-pepper hair ordered up flutes of champagne, and teen-agers in Andover crew hats shared baskets of spicy fried calamari. It's boisterous and down-home, in an upscale kind of way: the generously chunky lobster roll comes in a red plastic basket, balanced on a white china plate.

It's a bit jarring, then, to take the elevator up to the cool sophistication of the dining room, on the third floor (the second floor hosts private functions). Here, Tourondel has created what feels like a Nordic refuge, with sleek white lines and a ceiling entirely taken up by a stunning, retractable skylight. At the back wall, under bright lights in the open kitchen, diners can watch chefs in their *toques blanches* putting knives to scales.

In such minimalist surroundings, parts of the menu feel excessive: port-infused figs, caramelized walnuts, and a tart blue cheese overwhelm a sweet scallop salad. But the fish is superb. Served whole, for two, or in more modest fillets, they are brushed with olive oil and grilled, with sauces—tomato-tarragon mayonnaise or soy-citrus wasabi, among others—offered on the side. The whole Cantonese-style red snapper is more elaborate, arriving at the table propped upright and mouth agape, with a dorsal fin of vivid greens, perfectly crisp skin, and a sweetly spicy chile-plum-wine sauce. Some of the restaurant's other whimsical touches are oddly out of place: the after-dinner glass jar of green-apple cotton candy seemed better suited to the carnival-like atmosphere downstairs. (First floor: open weekdays for lunch and dinner and weekends for dinner. Entrées $14-$24. Dining room: open Mondays through Saturdays for dinner. Entrées $25-$35 per pound for whole fish.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

TIERNO BOKAR
A new play by Peter Brook, about a Sufi mystic in colonial Africa, is a co-production of Brook's International Center of Theatre Creation and Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord. Performed in French, with English supertitles. (LeFrak Gymnasium, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. 212-239-6200.)

WHAT OF THE NIGHT
Jane Alexander stars in a new play drawn from the writings of Djuna Barnes, created by Alexander, Birgitta Trommler, and Noreen Tomassi. An M.C.C. Theatre production. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?
Bill Irwin and Kathleen Turner give remarkable but uneven performances in this revival of Edward Albee's 1962 play about a sparring couple—George and Martha—who wear their marital war wounds like badges of honor. They haven't found Albee's nuances yet, but they will, given a long run. The play itself, however, may age less well. Mores have changed, and, while George and Martha still disturb, they have lost their power to shock. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

WIDOWERS' HOUSES
Bernard Shaw's first play, revived by the Pearl Theatre Company, stars Dominic Cuskern, Rachel Botchan, and Sean McNall. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALTAR BOYZ
Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.

AVENUE Q
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

DEMOCRACY
Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St.
212-307-4100.

DESSA ROSE
Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center.
212-239-6200.

FAUST IN LOVE
Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-358-3657.
(Through April 30.)

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.

GOOD VIBRATIONS
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

JACKIE MASON: FRESHLY SQUEEZED
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St.
212-563-5544.

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

MOSES: THE GOSPEL, HIP-HOP MUSICAL
Citigroup Theatre at the Alvin Ailey Studios,
405 W. 55th St. (Through April 17.)

NINE PARTS OF DESIRE
Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St.
212-239-6200.

ORSON'S SHADOW
Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St.
212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

ROMANCE
Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.

THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING)
DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.

TWELVE ANGRY MEN
American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St.
212-719-1300.

WICKED
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

WOMAN BEFORE A GLASS
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St.
212-239-6200.

DANCE

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY
For its season at City Center, the troupe has hired its first outside choreographer—another Martha skilled at resonant gesture, the Pilobolus co-founder Martha Clarke. Her "Sueño" draws its imagery from Goya's "Los Caprichos," complete with hunchback. The season also features a revival of "Deaths and Entrances," Graham's frenzied abstraction on the lives of the Brontë sisters, with new costumes by Oscar de la Renta. A live orchestra accompanies the dances. ♦ April 13 at 7:30, April 15 at 8, and April 17 at 2: "Cave of the Heart," "Primitive Mysteries,"

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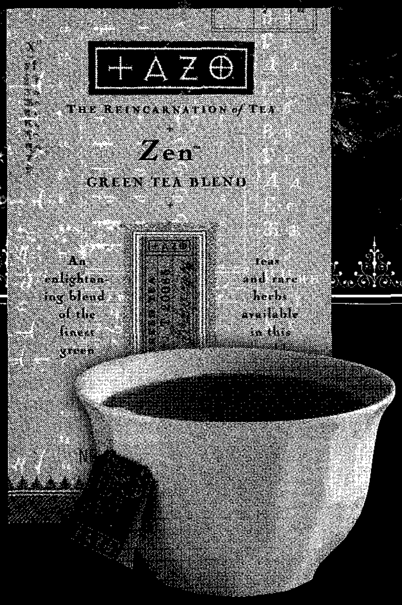
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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and "Appalachian Spring." ♦ April 14 at 7:30: "Embattled Garden," "Deaths and Entrances," and "Sketches from Chronicle." ♦ April 16 at 2: "Embattled Garden," "Errand Into the Maze," and "Appalachian Spring." ♦ April 16 at 8 and April 17 at 7: "Errand Into the Maze," "El Penitente," "Sueño," and "Sketches from Chronicle." (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
The only work new to New Yorkers in this year's BAM season is "Rock of Ages," a short, tender quartet set to Shubert's Adagio in E-Flat. Performed by a different group of dancers each night (all men, all women, a mix of both), the piece shifts subtly in tone with each cast. The program also includes "Somebody's Coming to See Me Tonight" (1995), Morris's sincere take on the nostalgia of Stephen Foster songs, and ends with the endlessly interweaving patterns of "Rhymes with Silver" (1997). The choreographer himself dances in his 2001 sendup of flamenco, "From Old Seville." The music, as always, is live. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. April 19 at 7:30. Through April 23.)

TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY
The choreographer's thirty-fifth-anniversary season begins, part of Lincoln Center's "New Visions" series (see This Week). ♦ April 13 at 7 and April 15 at 8: "Glacial Decoy," "Astral Convertible," and "Set and Reset." ♦ April 14 at 8 and April 16 at 8: "Geometry of Quiet," "Present Tense," and "How Long Does the Subject Linger on the Edge of the Volume . . ." (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500.)

DAVID NEUMANN/ADVANCED BEGINNER GROUP
Will Eno, whose drama "Thom Pain (Based on Nothing)" is now playing Off Broadway, has written a mock-epic opening monologue for Neumann's "Tough the Tough," a new dance-theatre piece about "the humanity, or someone named Stephen." Dressed in coveralls, Neumann and his dancers pantomime their way through brief tussles, tweaked Marx Brothers routines, and a changing of the guard along the India-Pakistan border. Chris Yon, poker-faced and zany, is the John Belushi of downtown dance. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. April 14-16 at 8:30 and April 17 at 7:30.)

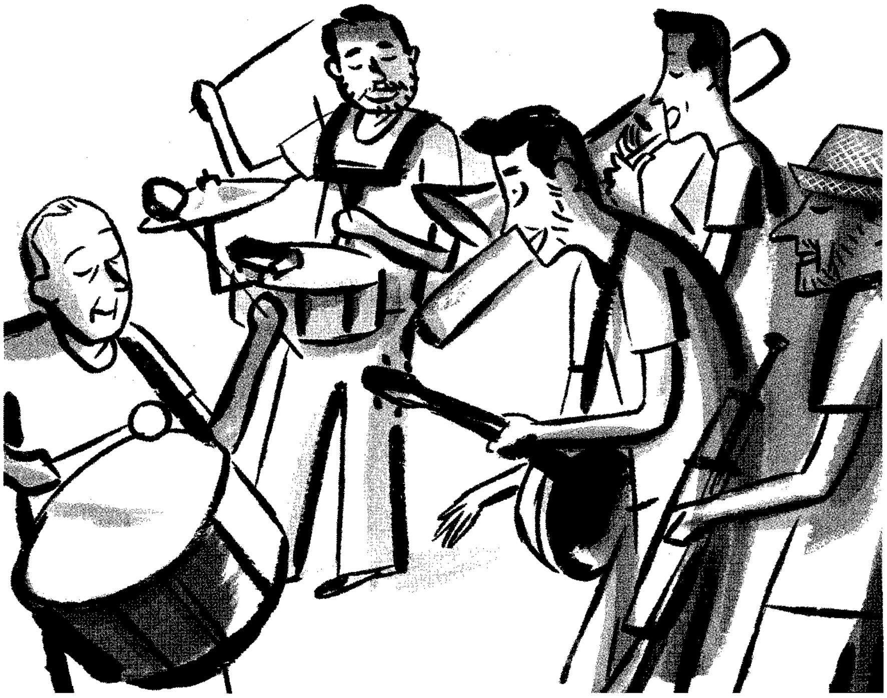
DANCE BY NEIL GREENBERG
With "Partial View," Greenberg continues his exploration of film and multiple perspectives. As live and prerecorded video footage by John Jesurun plays, four dancers execute Greenberg's Cunningham-influenced moves in a randomized pattern, like molecules. The evening also includes the companion piece "Partial View Solo," performed by the choreographer. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. April 13-16 at 7:30.)

LES BALLETS GRANDIVA
This all-male comedy ballet troupe continues its season at Symphony Space, which features parodies of Petipa, Fokine, Balanchine, and MacMillan. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-581-3836. April 11 and April 13-16 at 8.)

NRITYAGRAM DANCE ENSEMBLE
In an evening that evokes temple sculptures come to life, Surupa Sen creates a contemporary version of the ancient Indian ritual of Odissi, a sinuous dance through which young women were consecrated to the gods. Costumed in flowing fabrics and silver bangles, the performers curve, sway, balance, and strike poses while master musicians play sitar and flute. The dancers, who live communally and study philosophy, mythology, and meditation, perform with uncommon intensity. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. April 12-15 at 8, April 16 at 7, and April 17 at 2.)

NEW YORK THEATRE BALLET
A singularly lovely program gathers together work by Frederick Ashton and Antony Tudor, including revivals of Ashton's high-spirited Renaissance caper "Capriol Suite," from 1930, and Tudor's "Les Mains Gauches," from 1951—in a staging by his protégee and conservator Sallie Wilson (formerly of American Ballet Theatre). The concert also includes "Short Subjects," a tribute to the late Bobby Short, choreographed by Lois Bewley. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-307-4100. April 15-16 at 7:30.)

"SURFACE TENSION"
Chris Ferris & Dancers present recent works that experiment with concepts in modern dance. The sextet "Beyond Fish" contrasts organic and schematic movement, the solo "3 A.M." showcases compulsive repetitions, and the trio "Exploitation of Levitation in Gravitation" shows how dancers can support, or fail to support, each other in partnering. (Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 718-672-6965. April 16-17 at 8.)



Ceux Qui Marchent Debout (Those Who Walk Upright), at Joe's Pub.

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

DURAN DURAN
Some twenty years ago, this stylish British outfit applied a funk sheen to the New Wave sound and inspired a brand of slavish teen-age hysteria not seen since the height of Beatlemania. "Astronaut," their much hyped comeback album, which was released last year, hasn't sold anywhere near as well as, say, 1982's "Rio," but the band has staying power: tickets to this arena show are in short supply. (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. April 13 at 8.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Make no mistake, the **New Orleans Jazz Orchestra** will not be playing Dixieland at their New York début. Led by the trumpeter Irvin Mayfield, of Los Hombres Calientes fame, the N.O.J.O. is a thoroughly modern big band manned by the best of young Big Easy talent. (Allen Room, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. April 14-16 at 7:30.)

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"
No one can make the barbed wit of a **Dave Frishberg** tune gleam quite like **Blossom Dearie**; having both of these irreplaceable pianist-singers on a bill together might just, for a night, help us cope with the recent loss of Bobby Short. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center. 212-220-1460. April 14 at 8.)

WIDESPREAD PANIC
The jam band is back on the road after an almost two-year hiatus. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 212-307-7171. April 14-16 at 8.)

NELLY
Last year, the St. Louis-based rapper Cornell (Nelly) Haynes, Jr., became the first solo artist in history to have two separate albums, "Sweat" and "Suit," hold the top two spots simultaneously on the *Billboard* charts. The St. Lunatics, Fat Joe, and T.I. join him onstage. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. April 15 at 8.)

SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA
Led by the veteran Bronx-born pianist, arranger, and musical director Oscar Hernández, this band has been turning out upbeat, brassy salsa for the past five years. Their latest record, "Across 110th Street," includes contributions from such musical luminaries as Ray de la Paz and Maximo Rodriguez; it earned them the Grammy this year for best salsa album. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-307-4100. April 15 at 8.)

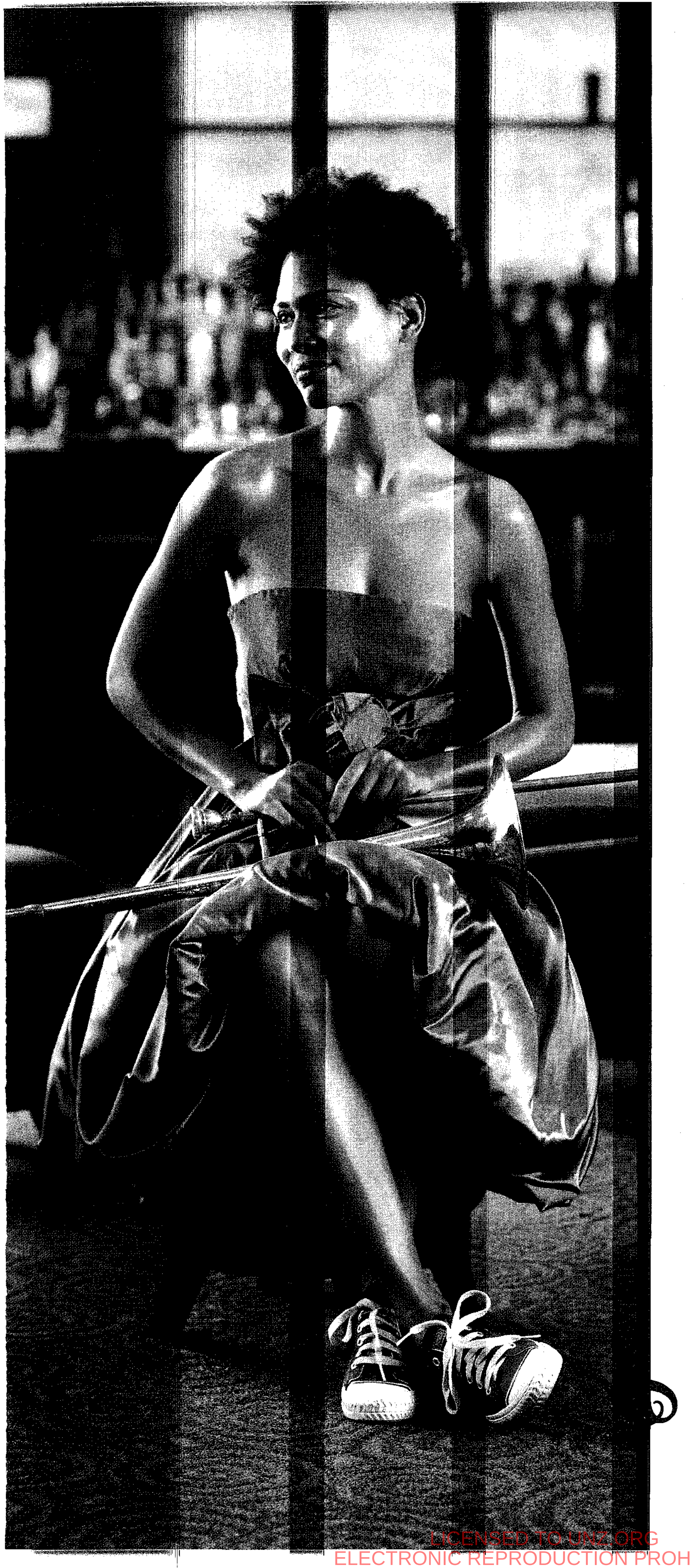
GARBAGE
The alternative foursome fronted by the flame-haired siren Shirley Manson—and featuring the former Nirvana producer Butch Vig on drums—returns with a new album, "Bleed Like Me," that swaps much of its pop trappings for a more feral sound. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. April 19 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—April 13-14: France is hardly known for producing proper rock bands, but it has become a source of some of the world's best electronic music. **M83**, a group started by two young men from Antibes, follows in the tradition of Air, Cassius, and Daft Punk. The duo fluctuates between dreamy ambience and raw dissonance. With **Ulrich Schnauss**, a noted producer from Germany. April 15: The sparkling power-pop performer **Brendan Benson**. April 16: A night of gritty swamp funk with Florida's **Mofro**. April 17-18: The **Bravery**, local favorites who serve up danceable modern rock, and **Ash**, an Irish pop-punk quartet, swap headlining slots. April 19: **Amy Ray**, of the Indigo Girls.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—April 14-16 and April 18-19: **Erasure** (see This Week). Through April 26. April 17: The Hasidic reggae performer **Matisyahu** was born on the 5th of Tamuz, 5739 (or June 30, 1979), as Matthew Miller. After a childhood in Westchester, a spell fol-



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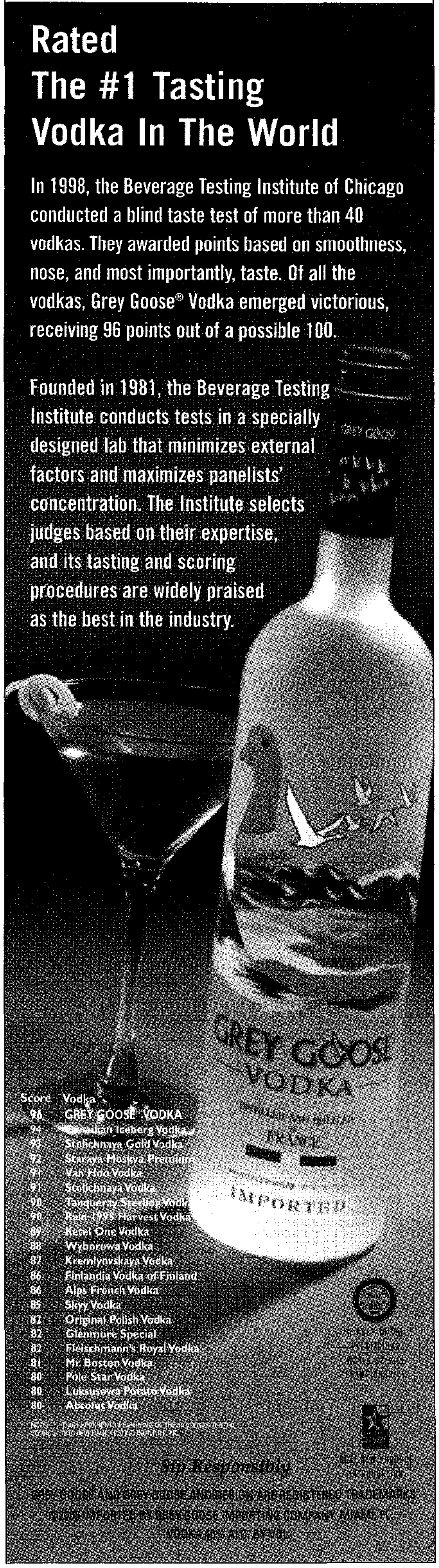

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Score	Vodka
96	GREY GOOSE VODKA
94	Canadian Iceberg Vodka
93	Stolichnaya Gold Vodka
92	Staraya Moskva Premium
91	Van Hoo Vodka
91	Stolichnaya Vodka
90	Tanqueray Sterling Vodka
90	Rain 1995 Harvest Vodka
89	Ketel One Vodka
88	Wyborowa Vodka
87	Kremlyovskaya Vodka
86	Finlandia Vodka of Finland
86	Alps French Vodka
85	Skyy Vodka
82	Original Polish Vodka
82	Glenmore Special
82	Fleischmann's Royal Vodka
81	Mr. Boston Vodka
80	Pole Star Vodka
80	Luksusowa Potato Vodka
80	Absolut Vodka

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lowing the jam band Phish, and an epiphany in the Colorado Rockies, he visited Israel and found Jah.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—April 14: The singer-songwriter **Ellis Paul.** April 15: **Ceux Qui Marchent Debout** (Those Who Walk Upright) have been around for the last dozen years, performing first with Parisian street-theatre troupes and then on the European club circuit. The six-piece Francophone band fuses energetic, brassy tunes with funk, R. & B., and ska inspired by Desmond Dekker and by the Skatalites to forge an exuberant, wholly danceable sound. April 19: The local ensemble **Las Rubias del Norte** rearranges Latin big-band music for a handful of instruments, including the glockenspiel. The **Mingus Orchestra** is here Thursdays, with sets at 11:30 and 1:30 A.M.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—April 19: **Greta Gertler,** a Brooklyn-based Australian expat with a weakness for lushly orchestrated seventies-era singer-songwriter pop, appears in the company of the Extroverts, which includes a tuba and a bass drum. With the rousing sounds of **Slavic Soul Party!**

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—April 15: The shimmering guitars of Brooklyn's **Ambulance Ltd.** April 16: **Of Montreal.** Led by Kevin Barnes, who formed the band in Athens, Georgia, nearly a decade ago, this group built its reputation trafficking in neo-psychedelia. In more recent years, however, Barnes has introduced an enticing pop element.

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—April 14: **Ramblin' Jack Elliott** is something of a musical vagabond: he's spent the past five decades exploring the open roads of America, and his weathered, folksy tunes recount those adventures. The Brooklyn-born rodeo man is as famous for his back-porch guitar melodies as for his appearances on albums by such musical icons as Woody Guthrie, Phil Ochs, and Johnny Cash. April 17: Top-shelf dance music from southwestern Louisiana with **T. Broussard** and the **Zydeco Steppers.**

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—April 15: The Bay Area m.c. **Gift of Gab,** one half of the duo Blackalicious, is known for tongue-twisting rhymes (check out "Alphabet Aerobics," from their 1999 album, "A2G"). He appears here with the lyricist **Lateef the Truth Speaker,** who recently worked with Gab's partner, the producer Chief Xcel, on the album "Maroons: Ambush." The **Real Live Show,** a local hip-hop and funk group, is the opener. April 16: The Brooklyn-based ensemble **Hem** and its fairy-tale melodies. April 17: Nearly thirty years ago, the **Undertones** were tirelessly fêted by the influential British d.j. John Peel for their ode to youthful lust, "Teenage Kicks." It helped them break out of Northern Ireland during the late-seventies punk explosion, but by 1983 the band was in tatters. They re-formed a few years ago (albeit without the signature high-pitched warble of the original vocalist, Feargal Sharkey), and they give today's crop of pop-punkers a run for their money.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through May 28: The elegant vocalist **Karen Akers** personifies New York cabaret, but she shuns chestnuts in favor of imaginatively programmed evenings.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—April 13-16: The **Dave Holland Big Band.** It took the bassist Holland a few decades to turn his dream of a working big band into reality, but now it looks like it's here to stay. The new album "Overtime," released earlier this year, displays Holland's gift for balancing orchestral heft with substantial contributions from feisty soloists, including the saxophonist **Chris Potter** and the trombonist **Robin Eubanks.**

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—April 12-17: A double bill with **Mary Stallings** and **Hank Jones.** The veteran vocalist Stallings, who can cite Count Basie and Dizzy Gillespie as former employers, offers songs from her new album, "Remember Love." During his portion of the evening, Jones—the last great bebop-era pianist still standing—presents a tribute to Frank Sinatra.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and **Barbara Cook.** The grande dame of musical theatre and cabaret starts a six-week engagement on April 12.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Through April 17: The **Kenny Barron** sextet. The dean of mainstream pianists is also a topnotch bandleader, and his sextet may be the most satisfying of his ensembles; its biting front-line horns provide a forum for Barron's original compositions.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—April 13-17: The guitarist **Mike Stern** has come a long way since his mid-eighties stint with Miles Davis. His twin impulses—fusion flash and bebop brawn—have achieved harmony. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

LE JAZZ AU BAR
41 E. 58th St., near Madison Ave. (212-308-9455)—Through April 17: **Dee Dee Bridgewater** has tremendous vocal talents, as well as energy, sex appeal, and vivacity to spare. Her shows are jazz-singing seminars that come in the form of a one-woman party.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—The **Jazz Composers Collective,** formed thirteen years ago, continues to unite bands that regularly venture beyond the mainstream. The collective's fifth annual festival runs April 12-17 and features the **Ted Nash Double Quartet** (April 13), **Ben Allison & Medicine Wheel** (April 14), and the **Herbie Nichols Project** (April 15). (For more details, visit www.jazzcollective.com.)

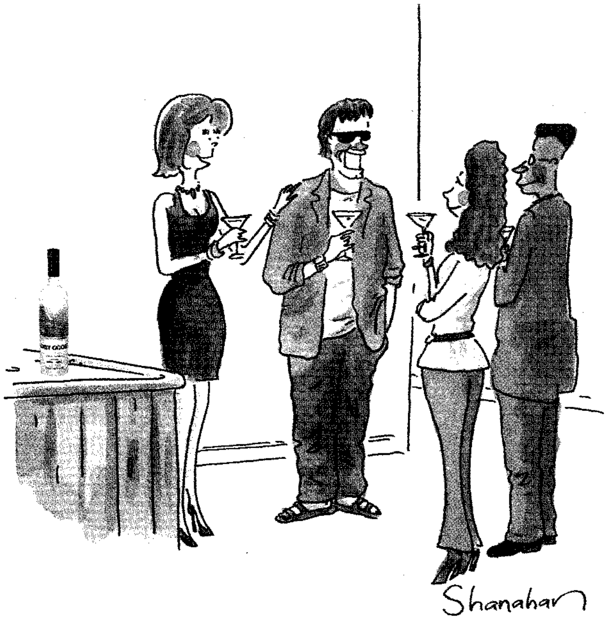
SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—April 13: The saxophonist **Bob Mintzer** has held down a steady job with the lite-jazz group the Yellow Jackets for some time now, but his own bruising big band reminds you that Mintzer apprenticed with the likes of Tito Puente and the Jones-Lewis ensemble. April 15-16: The vocalist **Carla Cook** is a commanding performer with a taste for standards old and new, including lustrous renditions of Neil Young's "Heart of Gold" and Kurt Weill's "September Song."

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through April 17: The **Bill Charlap** trio is about as good as mainstream piano jazz gets these days. Working with the bassist **Peter Washington** and the drummer **Kenny Washington,** Charlap displays the poise and taste, and, increasingly, the inner depth, of such grand stylists as Hank Jones and the late Tommy Flanagan. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"Max Ernst: A Retrospective."** More than a hundred and eighty paintings, drawings, sculptures, collages, and illustrated books by the restlessly creative artist (1891-1976). Through July 10. ♦ **"Diane Arbus: Revelations,"** an indeed revealing (though gratingly worshipful) retrospective, confirms Arbus's achievement as a revolutionary photographer. She turned picturemaking inside out. She didn't gaze at her subjects; she induced them to gaze at her. Selected for their strangeness and confidence, they burst through



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Grey Goose L'Orange for Mr. Bicoastal here."

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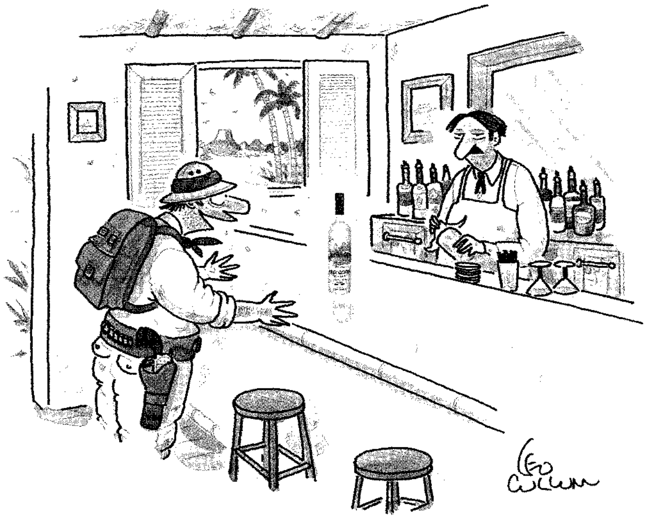

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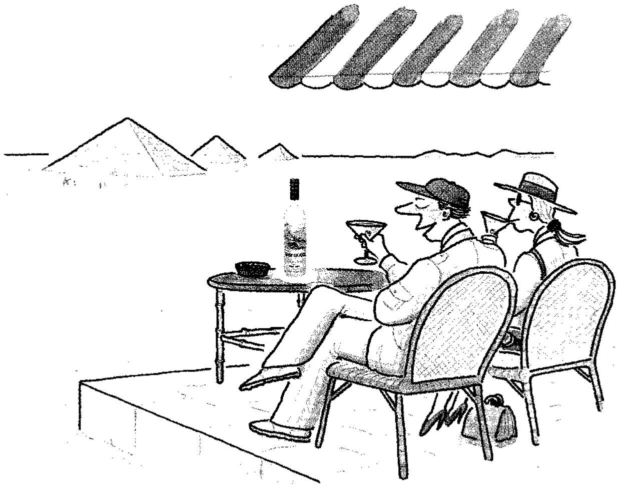
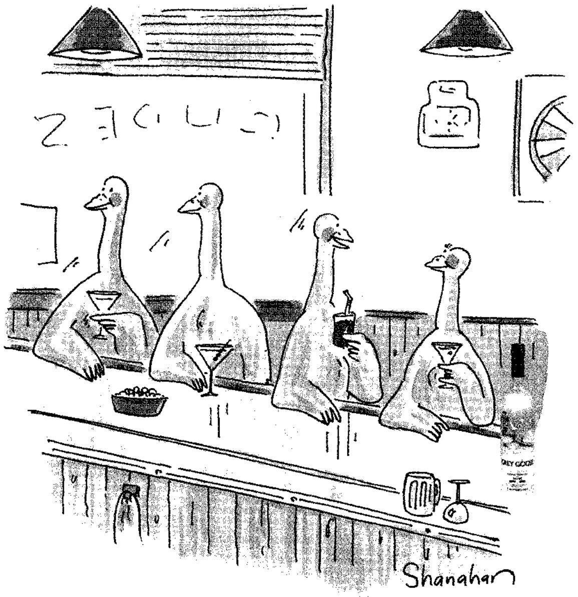


"Fantastic, fabulous, amazing,
...and look at those pyramids."

GREY GOOSE
La Vanille



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GREY GOOSE®
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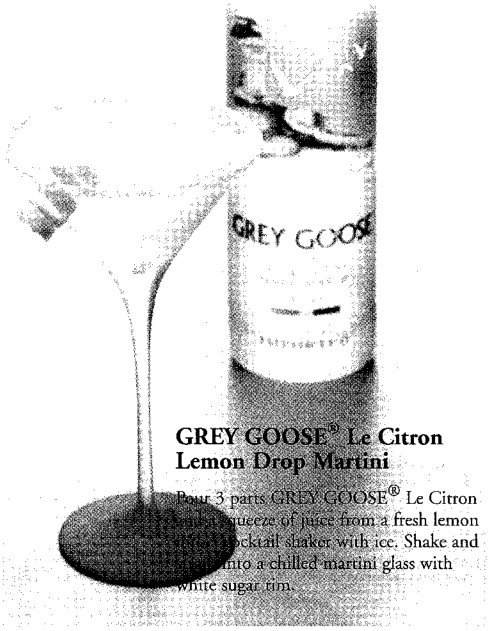

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Le Citron

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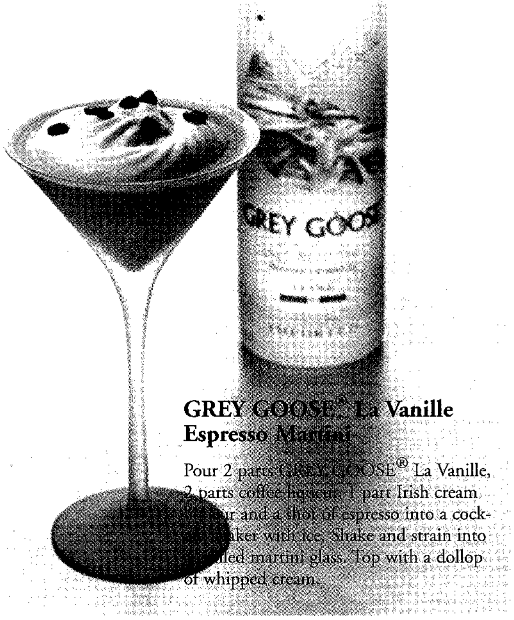

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Espresso Martini

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"Ammunition Airlift During the Relief of Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, April, 1968," by Larry Burrows, at Laurence Miller.

the camera lens with a presence so intense that whatever attitude she or you or anyone might take toward them disintegrates. The show's overstuffed component of biographical material is peculiarly inapt, given that Arbus is important not for what she was but for her regular feat of vanishing, as a personality, when her camera clicked. Through May 30. ♦ Duccio's "Madonna and Child," circa 1300, a triumphant recent acquisition for the Met. Through May 15. ♦ **"From Filippo Lippi to Piero della Francesca: Fra Carnevale and the Making of a Renaissance Master."** Through May 1. ♦ **"The Kano School: Orthodoxy and Iconoclasm."** Through June 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Thomas Demand."** The German artist's crisp photographs of cut-and-glued, life-size mockups of unpeopled environments suggest that, like photographs, our assumptions about reality are paper thin. Through May 30. ♦ In **"Contemporary Voices: Works from the UBS Art Collection,"** some forty works promised to MOMA as a corporate gift are accompanied by thirty more from the firm's collection. The exhibition was arranged by in-house curators targeting gaps in the museum's own holdings, and it is installed old-MOMA style, as a chronological primer on late-twentieth-century art. Selections from the sixties, seventies, and eighties include an excellent Guston, two good Richters, a nice Artschwager, and a wonderful room of Susan Rothenbergs. Younger artists, not surprisingly, are less well served; in the last room, only Andreas Gursky is represented by a really first-class piece. Through April 25. ♦ **"Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape"** surveys contemporary landscape design with elaborate architectural models, virtual tours, video, and photographs. Through May 16. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"The Eye of the Storm: Works in Situ by Daniel Buren."** Through June 8. ♦ **"The Hugo Boss Prize 2004: Rirkrit Tiravanija."** The artist has built a small, narrow-cast television station inside the museum. Through May 11. ♦ Slater Bradley's **"Doppelganger Trilogy."** Through May 22. ♦ The museum surveys twentieth-century innovation in painting with three exhibitions of work drawn from the permanent collection: **"School of Paris,"** through May 3, and **"Expressionism"** and **"Paul Klee,"** both through May 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Cy Twombly: Fifty Years of Works on Paper"** proves that the more works by Twombly that you see at once, the better each one gets. Fugitive spontaneities of line and texture can seem incidental, or even accidental, in isolation; in quantity, their teeming persistence gently overwhelms. Twombly's style is all nuance, inflecting desultory scribbles and scrawls. His tender ardor for history-saturated Mediterranean and Caribbean eros builds a charge of sea-breezy, elegiac joys. If he forces things at times—with tricky numbers and glypyhs in the nineteen-sixties or, lately, with lurid color—it is to remind us of his ambition. This lyric poet aspires to the laurels of an epic bard. Through May 8. ♦ **"Tim Hawkinson,"** a mid-career retrospective of the California artist's diverse inventions, including the football-field-size "Überorgan," an automated bagpipe housed in the sculpture garden at 590 Madison Avenue, at Fifty-seventh Street. Through May 29. ♦ **"Ellen Gallagher: DeLuxe,"** a series of embellished images based on advertisements from mid-century African-American magazines. Through May 15. ♦ **"Prints Into Drawings,"** a selection of work by artists who bring the techniques of drawing to their printmaking efforts. Opens April 14. ♦ **"Set Up: Recent Acquisitions in Photography."** Through June 26. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Basquiat"** is an important, intensely enjoyable retrospective of the neo-expressionist, who died in 1988, at the age of twenty-seven. Jean-Michel Basquiat turns out to be the essential American painter of the early eighties, who brought lyrical truth to a largely facetious revival of showily subjective modern styles. He did his best work in an early rush, in 1982: paintings of furious and hilarious masked heads, strewn with verbal and visual quotations from many sources. Room after room, the viewer rafts a stream of consciousness so acute as to suggest Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway," jazzified. Through June 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India,"** a dual-venue show with the Queens Museum that attempts to take the pulse of the world's largest democracy. Through June 5. ♦ Michael Joo's **"Bodhi Obfuscatus (Space-Baby)."** Through May 1. ♦ **"Imperial Elegance: Chinese Ceramics from the Asia Society's Rockefeller Collection."** Through May 1. (Open Tuesdays throug Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—Geneviève Straus was married to the composer Georges Bizet, and it was in her Parisian salon that Marcel Proust observed the social minuets and Dreyfusard politics that shaped "À la Recherche du Temps Perdu." The Vienna Secession, it was said, was born in the reception rooms of Berta Zuckerkandl, and Hegel might have met Paganini at Amalie Beer's Berlin evenings. **"The Power of Conversation: Jewish Women and Their Salons"** presents photographs, paintings, and memorabilia that tell the stories of *salonnières* from Gertrude Stein to Salka Viertel, whose Santa Monica home was a Second World War-era meeting place for displaced intellectuals like Theodor Adorno and Thomas Mann. Through July 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays, 11 to 8; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—**"Surrealism U.S.A."** is a superb roundup of paintings and sculptures from the nineteen-thirties and forties survey-

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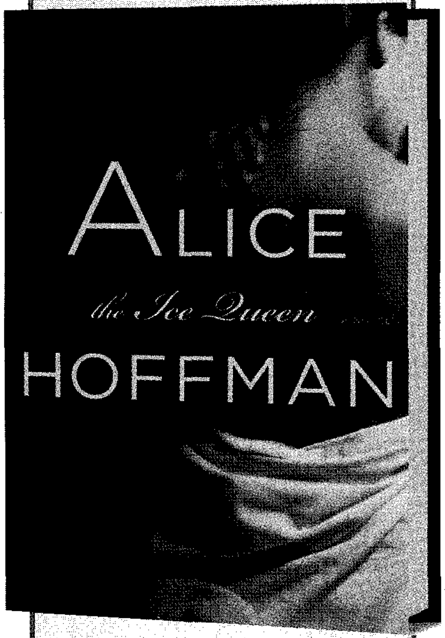

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ing modernism's version of punk. Through May 8. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Greater New York 2005,"** a coproduction with the Museum of Modern Art, collects work by more than a hundred and sixty artists from around the city who have emerged in the past five years. Through Sept. 26. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India,"** a dual-venue show with the Asia Society. Through June 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

TOLAND GRINNELL
Lichtenstein and Warhol are shamelessly rather than shrewdly evoked in sculptures that pair cleaning supplies—mops, dusters, and detergent bottles—with neon lights and comic-derived titles like "Boom," "Blam," and "Ka-Blaam." Grinnell is more successful when he dissects up-market consumerism, since his aesthetic derives from gadget (or luxury-goods) envy. Leather trunks bearing arsenals of knives, swords, and machetes ("A Simple Truth") or vacuums, brooms, and DustBusters ("Security System") are absurdly fun. Still, they pale in comparison with eighties consumer critiques by artists like Haim Steinbach, Ashley Bickerton, and, of course, Jeff Koons. Through April 23. (Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-752-2929.)

MARTIN KIPPENBERGER
Large, realist paintings from the artist's 1981 series "Lieber Maler, Male Mir" ("Dear Painter, Paint for Me"). Made with the assistance of a billboard painter, they're creamily handsome and quite palatable. They also provide plenty to look at, as in the street-corner portrait of the artist in a business suit seated on an abandoned sofa surrounded by trash bags. Through April 23. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave. 212-744-2313.)

Short List

BRUCE MCCALL
James Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. 212-593-3737.
Through April 30.

JOEL SHAPIRO
Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292.
Through April 16.

UNICA ZÜRN
Ubu, 416 E. 59th St. 212-753-4444.
Through April 16.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

BERTOZZI & CASONI
A team of ebullient Italian sculptors, formed in 1980, débuts in New York with teeming assemblies of life-size, almost but not quite fool-the-eye eggshells, Brillo boxes, chimpanzees, daffodils, and hand grenades, among many other things, all in sumptuous glazed ceramic. Giampaolo Bertozzi and Stefano Dal Monte Casoni dote on textures of crud and decay and like to razz canonical art, as with a reproduction of Botticelli's Venus in a dog dish. High artifice and ardent squalor might seem an unpromising brace of qualities, but these artists put it across with the heart-melting gladness of kids finding, under the Christmas tree, exactly what they always wanted. Through April 30. (Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 212-999-7337.)

JANE HAMMOND
Hammond answers with poetic eloquence the question of how to memorialize soldiers killed in an ongoing conflict. "Fallen" covers a low platform with beautifully colored autumn leaves—yellow, green, orange, burning red—made from digital prints on paper. Each unique leaf has been worked over until it looks just like the real thing, and each carries the name of an American soldier lost in Iraq; new leaves are added as the number of dead is revised (there were 1,511 when she started). The rest of the gallery contains collections of ink-jet-printed butterflies scattered across handmade maps, postage stamps crafted by the artist, digitally reconfigured found photographs, and matchboxes with the tiny hands of puppets and dolls inside—childlike accumulations that make a moving counterpoint to the more tragic catalogue. Through April 30. (Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470.)

GARY HUME
Some art objects lead one to ponder not the great problems in representation and expression but the luxe interiors where a decorator might place them. Hume's paintings in glossy enamel on aluminum are like this—essentially vacant, but redolent of designer chic. Highly abstracted polar bears and snowmen are motifs here, along with Hume's usual iconic, streamlined flowers and swinging doors. His haute-tacky palette of mirror-polished metal, sickly lavender, bright orange, and muddy brown persists as well. Through April 30. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

ALYSON SHOTZ
A transparent S-shaped curtain made of plastic Fresnel lenses is the centerpiece of Shotz's new show of sculpture. The sheet hangs from the ceiling in sinuous curves that allow the viewer to step into it and be surrounded by the thin oval disks, which magnify and distort objects on the other side; the effect is destabilizing and quite pretty. Other works include a series of small glass drops hung on monofilament like crystallized rain, and some folded, abstract swaths of translucent plastic, but the big curtain is the real success. Through April 16. (Eller, 526-30 W. 25th St. 212-206-6411.)

SHAHZIA SIKANDER
A flock of turbans lift from their wearers' heads to flutter in the air above; animals culled from the heraldic vocabulary of Persian miniatures morph into gracefully monstrous hybrids of gazelle, elephant, and rabbit; forms confined to circles and rectangles shift and explode in a series of graphite drawings. Sikander's new work continues her investigation of classical miniature painting but also evolves formally. A series of large gouaches on thick pinkish paper gives unusual precedence to negative space and nonfigurative form, while the collection of drawings privileges a lighter, quicker hand, and the animation with flying turbans gives Sikander's sense of humor free rein. Through April 16. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

Short List

RACHEL FEINSTEIN
Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.
Through April 23.

ERIC FISCHL
Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.
Through April 23.

DAMIEN HIRST
Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.
Through April 23.

MARTIN KIPPENBERGER
Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St.
212-206-9100. Through April 30.

JONAS MEKAS
Stendhal, 545 W. 20th St. 212-366-1549.
Through April 30.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"SOCIAL DEMOCRACY REVISITED"
The social safety nets in Scandinavian countries are so strongly woven that the standard of living is the highest in the world. But is this situation good for art? Here, works from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark investigate the predicament of the artist in the prosperous secular state. A presiding spirit is Ketil Nergaard's "Tilted Arse," a pillow-stuffed ef-

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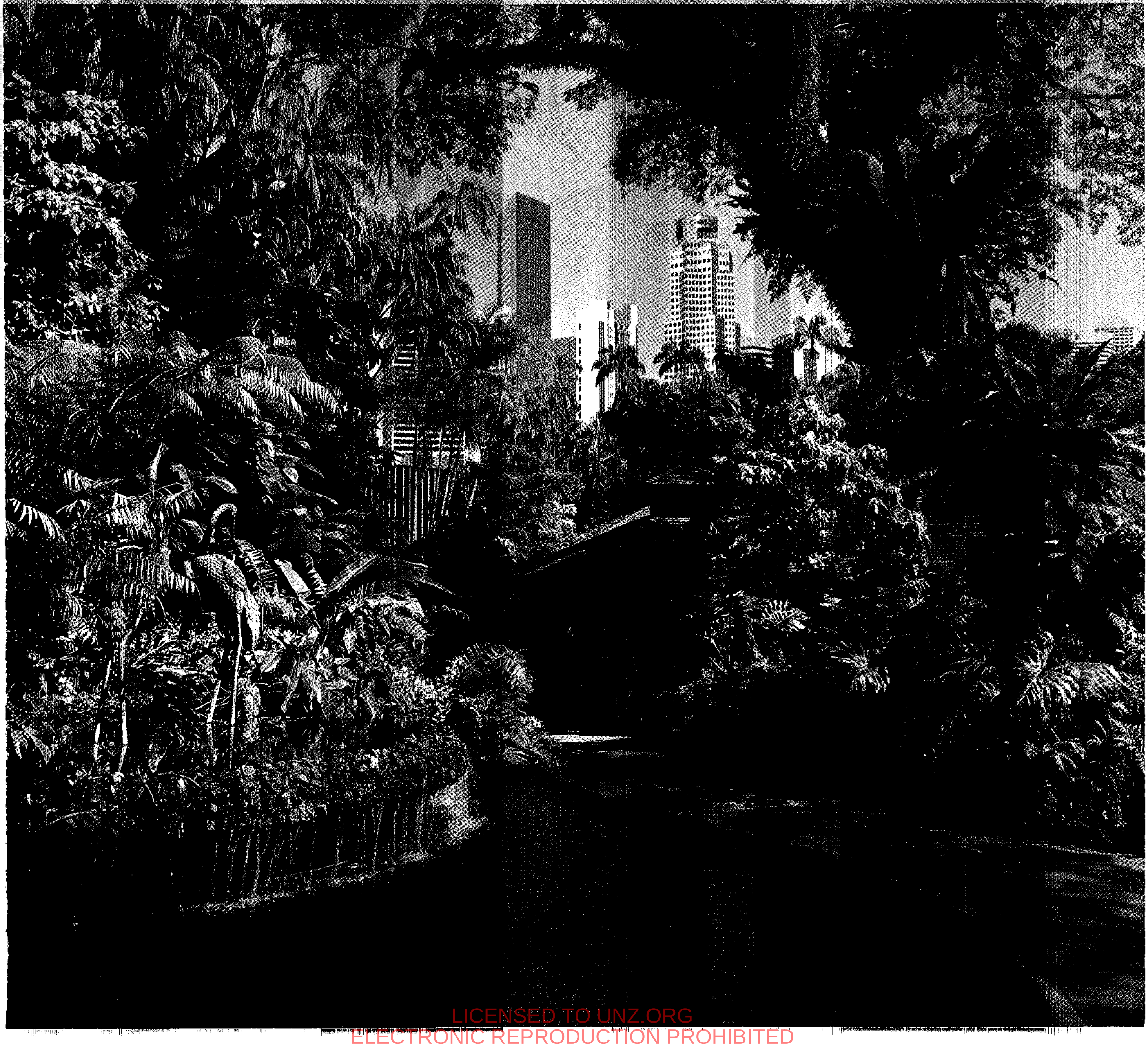
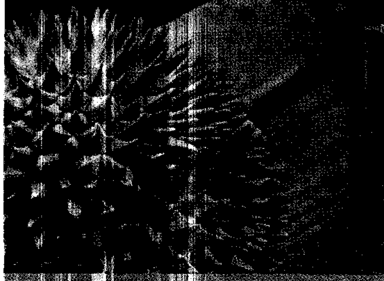
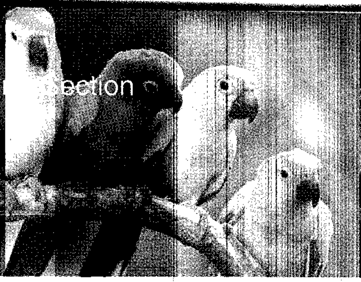
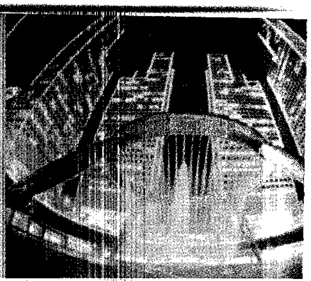
A travel account of 3 adventure-filled days of exotic food, breathtaking architecture and fascinating culture.




Durian Fruit

Esplanade-Theatres
on the Bay


Jurong BirdPark


Fountain of Wealth,
Suntec City

DAY 1 I was amazed at how refreshed I felt. Singapore Airlines' non-stop service to Singapore was definitely the way to travel to Southeast Asia. As the plane touched down at Changi International Airport, my excitement started to build. What surprises would this exotic land hold for me? I had 72 hours to find out.

Shopping on
Orchard Road

The ride into town gave me a first glimpse of my new surroundings. Singapore is also known as the Garden City, which is understandable, as I counted numerous gardens, parks and nature reserves surrounding its skyscrapers and highways. Before I knew it, I was at the splendid Raffles The Plaza Hotel. After check-in, a quick shower and a change of clothes, I was ready to explore. My first stop—the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Founded in 1859, the Singapore Botanic Gardens is not only an important center for botanical research, but also a beautiful recreational park and garden located right in the heart of the city. Encompassing 148 acres, it's considered one of the finest tropical gardens in the world—home to over 3,000 species of flora and fauna including some very unusual orchid varieties that you very rarely see in their natural habitat.

Chinese, Indian and Malaysian influences have managed to make Singapore cuisine as diverse as it is delicious.

After an afternoon of exploration, I was famished. I headed to the Newton Hawker Center — an enormous congregation of food stalls (hawkers) in the center of town offering every type of food imaginable. Chinese, Indian and Malaysian influences have managed to make Singapore cuisine as diverse as it is delicious. I settled on Hainanese Chicken Rice. Fragrant rice cooked in chicken stock served with roasted chicken and a spicy garlic chili sauce — delicious!

Later that evening, I was still in a rather adventurous spirit, so I decided to sign up for the famous Night Safari. Hosted by the Singapore Zoo, it's a unique guided tour through 100 acres of tropical jungle, where you can experience first-hand the natural behavior of the mostly nocturnal animals that inhabit it. With the help of special low-intensity lighting, I was able to see, up close and personal, the fascinating and rarely seen behavior of these creatures, all from the comfort of my limo buggy.

DAY 2 As the sun poured into my hotel room the next morning, I pondered my plans for the day. I decided to explore some of the ethnic districts that give Singapore its unique cultural flavor. About a tenth of Singapore's population is Indian, many of them Hindu, so I figured that Little India would be a good place to start. The first thing you notice about this charming section of the city is the aromatic array of spices, flowers and sweets. The district is thriving, teeming with shops offering everything from Indian jewelry to household goods. I picked up an intricately hand-made necklace and a beautiful red silk sarong for a friend, and enjoyed the best curry I've ever tasted.

Later that day, I made it a point to visit the Underwater World on Sentosa Island. Housing over 250 species of sea life and more than 2,500 individual animals, this state-of-the-art facility is considered one of the finest marine exhibits in the world. I'm a bit of an oceanography nut, and I was amazed by the 270-foot, see-through tunnel that completely immerses you in the mysterious world of the ocean. There in the tunnel I came face to face with the predators that prowl the ocean depths— reef sharks, leopard sharks and nurse sharks. Equally impressive was the Dolphin Lagoon, a specially designed

Decorative Lanterns, Deepavali

DID YOU KNOW?
Singapore is one of only two cities in the world to have a rainforest within its urban center. (Rio de Janeiro is the other)

Singapore Chili Crab

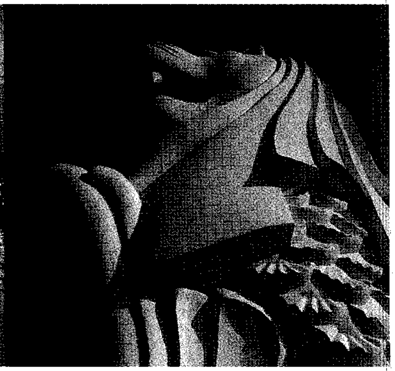
Fullerton Hotel

Peranakan Tea Set

$3 million dolphin habitat where the Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins (or "Pink" Dolphins) live.

No trip to Singapore would be complete without exploring its many modern architectural showcases. Among the most prominent of these is the distinctive Esplanade-Theaters on the Bay. Affectionately nicknamed "The Durian" by the locals because of its resemblance to the prickly-skinned fruit, the Esplanade is an immense structure, featuring a state-of-the-art 1,600-seat concert hall and a 2,000-seat theater, as well as shopping and dining facilities. One could truly spend the entire day exploring this architectural and cultural wonder. I did my best, and left exhausted.

Amrita Spa, Raffles The Plaza Hotel



Merlion

DAY 3 After waking up gloriously late, I was craving a massage. Lucky for me, Raffles The Plaza Hotel has one of the most sought-after spas in Southeast Asia—the Amrita Spa. I indulged in a treatment called Aroma Harmony, which includes an aroma pressure point facial massage and an intensive stress releasing scalp massage treatment to help create inner balance and harmony. When I was through, I wasn't sure if I had achieved such a elevated state of inner being, but I certainly had an incredible burst of energy. I hustled down to Orchard Road, Singapore's shopping mecca, where the latest Japanese electronics and designer boutiques compete with antique stores for your attention. They say New York is the city that never sleeps, but they certainly don't have the Mustafa Center, Singapore's 24-hour mall where insomniacs can satisfy their urge to buy the latest technological gadgetry at 4 a.m.

Since I had spent the better part of my trip sightseeing, I was ready for a night out on the town. First I wanted to dine at one of the many wonderful waterfront restaurants that populate the Singapore River, Kallang Waterfront and East Coast sections of town. The choices are bewildering; you can sample anything from progressive Chinese to traditional Indian to country French. I decided to try the seafood that Singapore is famous for at Jumbo Seafood, located at the East Coast Center. The chili crab, wok-fried with chili, garlic and tomato paste was simply amazing and surprisingly reasonable. After dinner I headed to the Post Bar at the Fullerton Hotel for a drink. Previously the city's General Post Office, this is the place where Singapore's beautiful people cut loose and unwind. As I sipped on my Singapore Sling, my last day in Singapore came to a close. I realized I had barely scratched the surface of this wonderful place. The next day I was going to catch a flight to Bali, one of the many destinations that's just a short flight away from Singapore. That's when I decided that another visit here wasn't an option, it was a necessity. **visitsingapore.com**

As my last day in Singapore came to a close, I realized I had barely scratched the surface of this wonderful place.

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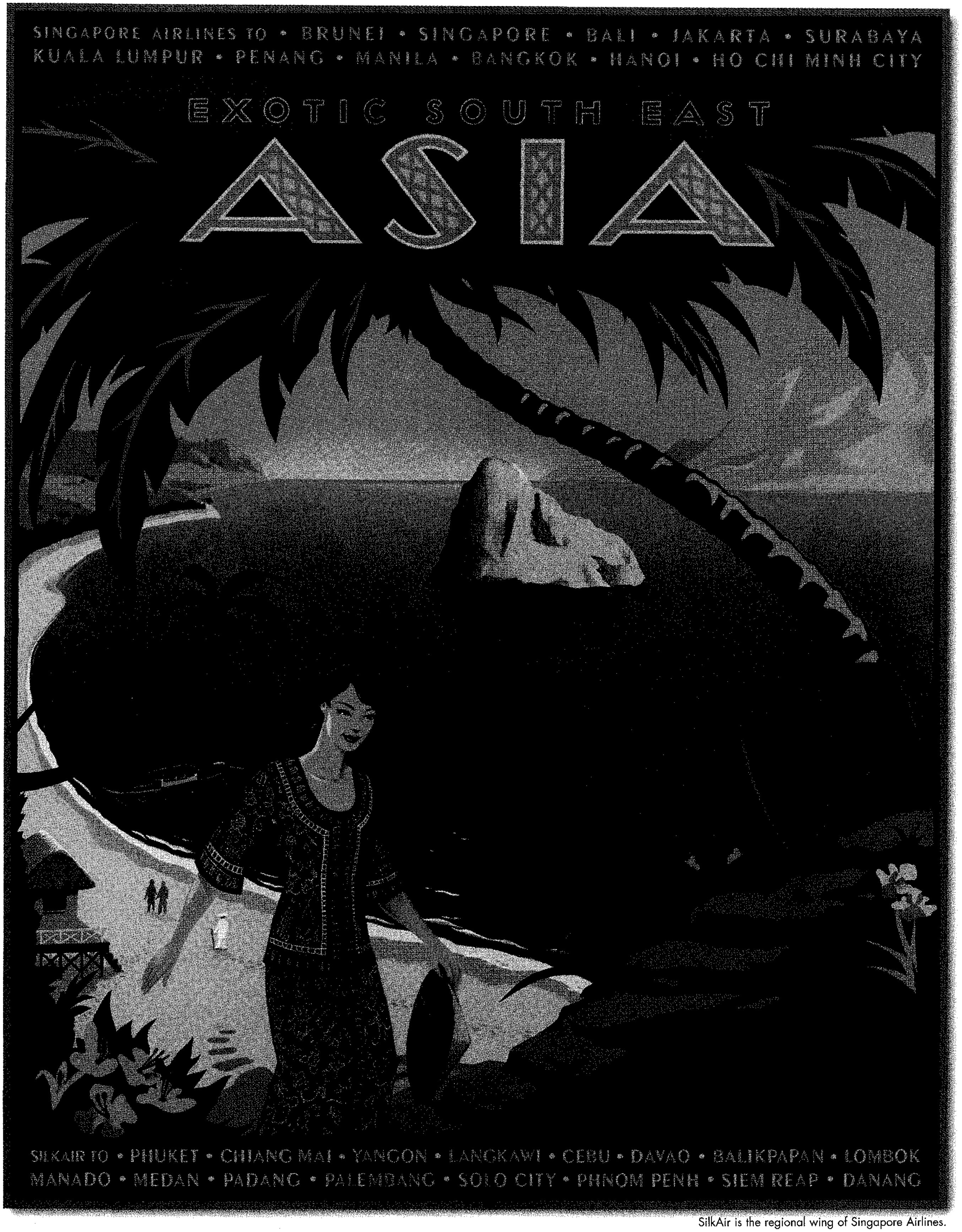
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figy in red-striped pajamas (the artist played this role for the first few days of the show, before he had to return to Europe) who sprawls slothfully on a loft bed, listening to tinny music. A similar dull complacency informs Aleksandra Mir's "Danes in the Sun," a newsprint compendium of relentlessly banal leisure snapshots culled from local newspaper and historical archives. Through April 16. (Apex Art, 291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

"3X ABSTRACTION: NEW METHODS OF DRAWING BY HILMA AF KLINT, EMMA KUNZ, AND AGNES MARTIN"
Works on paper by three visionary women. The Swiss artist Emma Kunz (1892-1963) and the Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) shared interests in telepathy, Theosophy, synesthesia, and mystical healing. Klint's bold, geometric abstractions suggest affinities to Malevich and Kandinsky, while Kunz's layered, Spirograph-like drawings are entrancing. Adding the Zen perfections of small grid studies by the American treasure Agnes Martin (1912-2004) subtly highlights the cerebration in Kunz and Klint while underlining Martin's own spiritual intensity. Through May 21. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166.)

Short List

JEFF DAVIS
KS Art, 73 Leonard St., at Broadway. 212-219-9918. Through April 30.

ELLSWORTH KELLY
Peter Freeman, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-5154. Through April 23.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LARRY BURROWS
Exemplary black-and-white prints of anonymous Londoners and a few celebrities (T. S. Eliot acknowledging a cat as he leaves a theatre by the stage door, a teary Winston Churchill) from the fifties seem soaked in nostalgia when viewed alongside the photojournalist's work of a decade later. Burrows went to Vietnam for *Life* in 1962, just as the U.S. troops arrived. The most harrowing images of the war on view here are a selection from a photo-essay that ran in *Life* forty years ago: "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13" documents a day in the life of James Farley, a fresh-faced twenty-one-year-old soldier, whose helicopter was attacked on a rescue mission. Burrows himself was lost in a helicopter over Laos in 1971. Through April 30. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 212-397-3930.)

LARRY CLARK
This retrospective covers a lot of ground, much of it more than once. Beginning with his first book, "Tulsa," published in 1971—in which he chronicled intimately, in black-and-white, the lives of his hometown friends—Clark has focussed on kids: adolescents shooting up, fondling guns, and looking ready for a car wreck. In "Teenage Lust," from 1983, Clark spliced his autobiography (using family photos, text, newspaper clippings, and court records) with images of teen-agers hot to trot. An updated version of the material appeared in the 1995 movie "Kids," represented here by big color stills of skateboarders in Washington Square Park. A group of collages shows Clark making the transition from still photography to movies, packing motion into a frame. Through June 5. (International Center of Photography, 1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 212-857-0000.)

ANETA GRZESZYKOWSKA AND JAN SMAGA
For devotees of online real-estate listings with schematic floor plans and three-hundred-and-sixty-degree virtual tours, this show will be pure manna. The two young Polish artists take hundreds of pictures of lived-in apartments, all from above, then seamlessly reconfigure the shots into an aerial map of the subjects' lives. In the finished pieces, we see what's on the stove, who's in the bathtub, and who doesn't put away the dishes. Is it only a lack of space that compels someone to place a grand piano at the foot of the bed, or does it belong to a manic composer prone to bouts of sleeplessness? These reality dioramas are clever studies

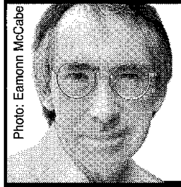

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Photo: Eamonn McCabe

IAN McEWAN

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"Dazzling." —MICHIKO KAKUTANI, *The New York Times*

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"What a stunningly successful tour de force!" —KURT VONNEGUT

SATURDAY

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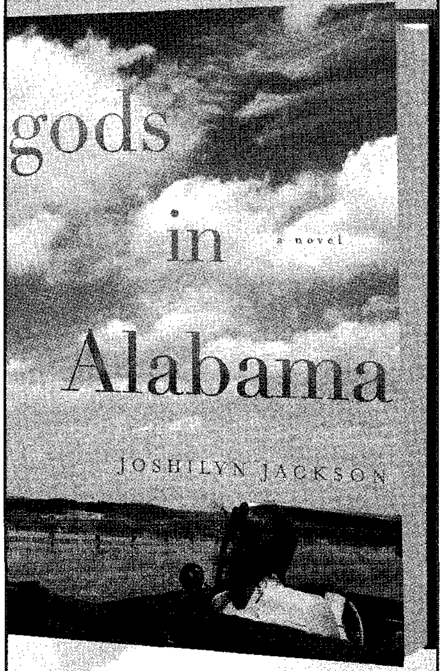

"JOSHILYN JACKSON'S STELLAR DEBUT HAS ALL THE ELEMENTS OF GREAT SOUTHERN FICTION, a plucky heroine with a sense of humor, a gripping tale and a mysterious dead body that needs explanation....Takes the reader on a wild ride of despair, hope and redemption that no reader is likely to ever forget."
—*ADRIANA TRIGIANI, AUTHOR OF *BIG STONE GAP*

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—*LIBRARY JOURNAL* (STARRED REVIEW)

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PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTINE RODIN

of domesticity done with ingenious use of digital technology. Through April 23. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.)

MARTINA MULLANEY
A white box of tissues sits on a rumpled white bedsheet close against a bare white wall in one of Mullaney's large color prints taken in homeless shelters and hostels in the U.K. These lonely pictures fuse a hardboiled documentary sensibility with an aesthetic finesse that constantly threatens to undermine the work. How can something so ugly—a soiled mattress, cracked plaster—be forced into an image that is so pretty? By leaving the people out of the frame and concentrating on the rumpled sheets and dirty blankets used day after day by who knows who, Mullaney avoids simply exploiting pathos. The wan greens or pinks of the walls are cut off by striped ticking or orange waffle-weave blankets two-thirds of the way down the images, all of which is unassailably beautiful and makes for a strong U.S. début. Through April 30. (Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370.)

STEPHEN SHORE
In the nineteen-seventies, along with William Eggleston, Shore elevated color film to the realm of artistry. The youngest photographer to have his work collected by MOMA—he was only fourteen then, in 1961—Shore spent the years between 1973 and 1978 taking photographs throughout the U.S. and Canada, calling the resulting series "Uncommon Places." Shot with an eight-by-ten view camera, which requires a long exposure, the rural and urban landscapes, interiors, and portraits at first appear to be banal shots of ugly places. But the care Shore took in composing the shots, his camera's capacity to record minute detail, and the lost color palette of the seventies make for an invaluable historic record as well as a true artist's most influential work—just ask Andreas Gursky. Through April 16. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.)

GARRY WINOGRAND
It was an ordinary Jewish wedding reception on the Upper East Side from the looks of it, but it had an extraordinary photographer to document it. These eleven black-and-white prints from 1962, exhibited under the title "Wedding Party," start out somewhat stiff and formal, but gradually the horizon tilts, the bride and groom kiss, and the guests hit the dance floor. In the final shot, the groom and the father of the bride look downright euphoric. Through April 30. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

Short List

DAVID LA CHAPELLE
Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 212-343-7300. Through April 16.

ANGELA STRASSHEIM
Marvelli, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-3363. Through April 30.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
April 13 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: A sale of jewelry, including some lovely Art Nouveau pieces and a spectacular necklace in warm, autumnal colors made of gold, citrine quartz, pearl, and enamel, created by Tiffany and Co. in the early twentieth century. ♦ April 15 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: The house offers an extensive array of watches and clocks, featuring a rare split-seconds chronograph made for the jockey Wendel Eads in 1939 and an Asian-inspired English eighteenth-century table clock, carved out of wood in the shape of a mountain, complete with human figures and a gushing waterfall. ♦ April 16 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: This two-session sale devoted to the accoutrements of the English country house kicks off with a series of silhouette pictures and segues into furnishings: two extra-wide George II armchairs make one think of Falstaffian behinds, while a japanned Queen Anne cabinet, decorated with lotus flowers and cranes, evokes the taste for Oriental decorative styles. A second session, devoted to silver and silver-gilt ware, follows. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

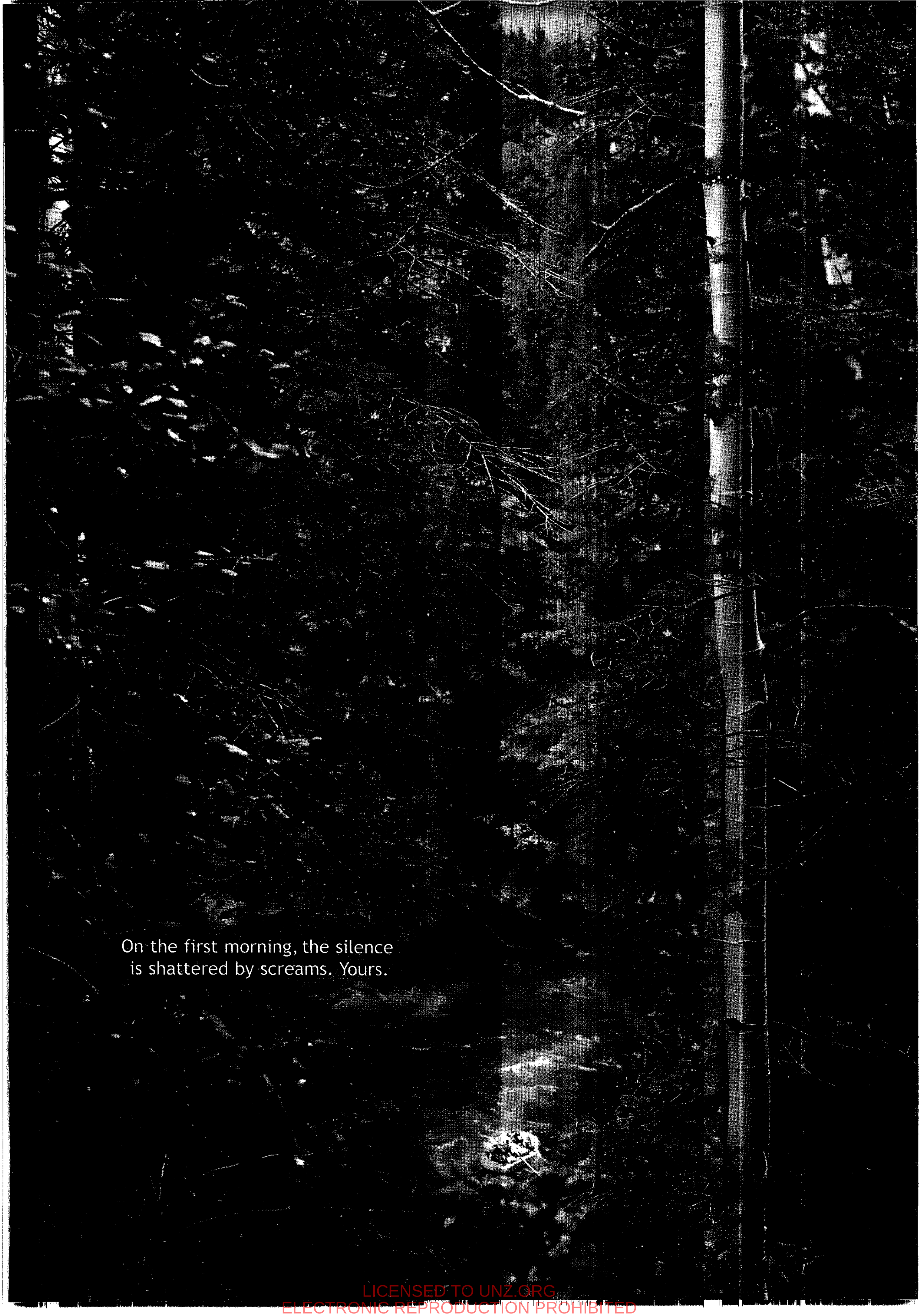
CHRISTIE'S
April 14 at 10 A.M.: The centerpiece of this sale of silver, objects of virtu, and Russian works of art is an enormous late-nineteenth-century French parcel-gilt silver-enamel-and-niello inkstand (which also tells the time and the weather). A group of five photographs taken at the Vilna Infantry School in 1910 is more sombre; the regime that the soldiers were sworn to defend would fall in less than a decade. ♦ April 15 at 10 A.M. and 2: This sale of English furniture, some of which comes from an Upper East Side town house designed by the architect Mott B. Schmidt, is a trove of the eighteenth century's greatest hits. Highlights include a richly flowered George III sycamore-rosewood-and-marquetry commode from 1775, which is a fine example of the French "antique" style and is expected to bring a quarter of a million dollars, and a boldly designed mid-Georgian ormounted mahogany reading table from 1755. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

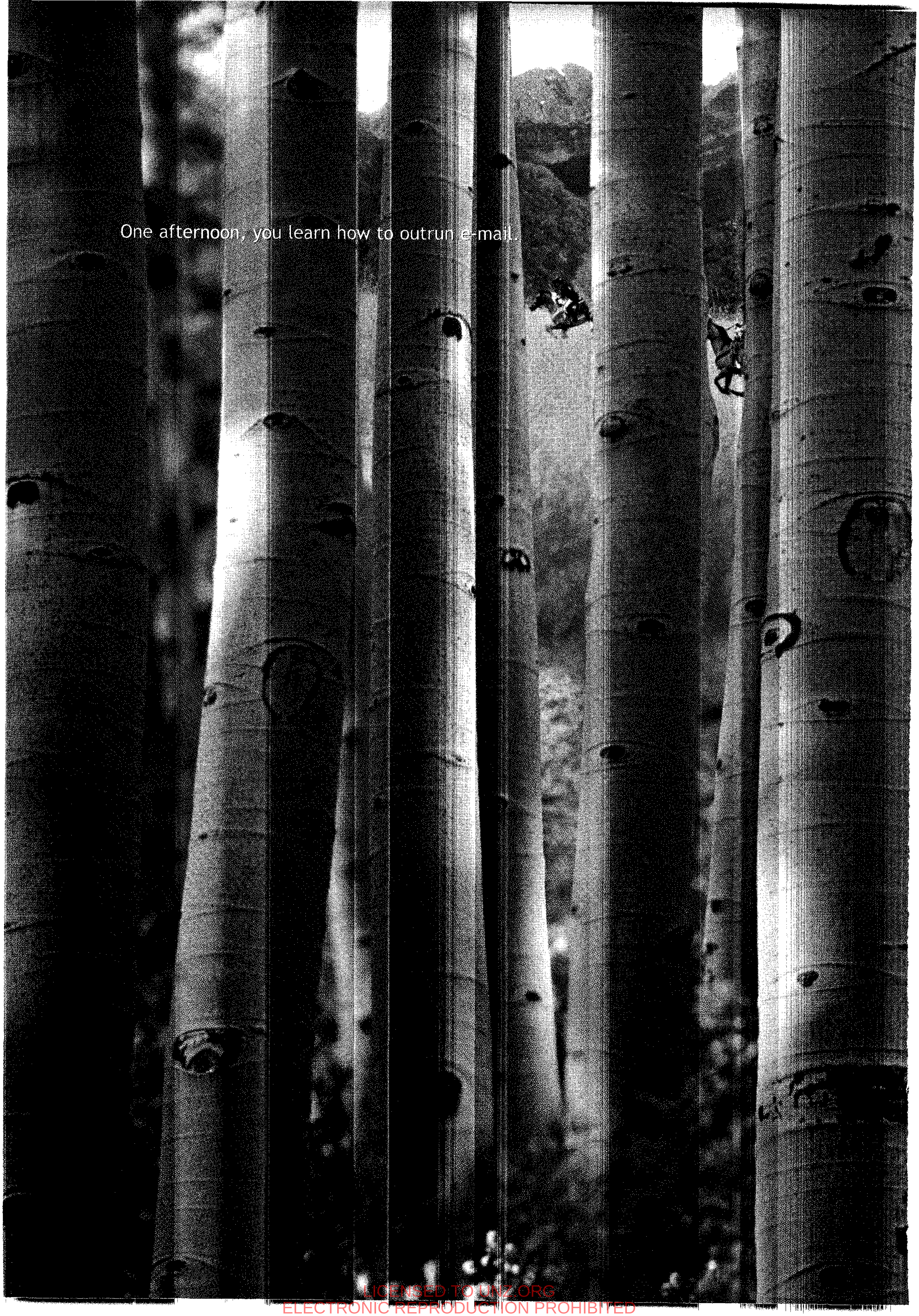
SWANN
April 14 at 10:30 A.M. and 2: First editions of novels by Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Agatha Christie headline an auction of literature from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

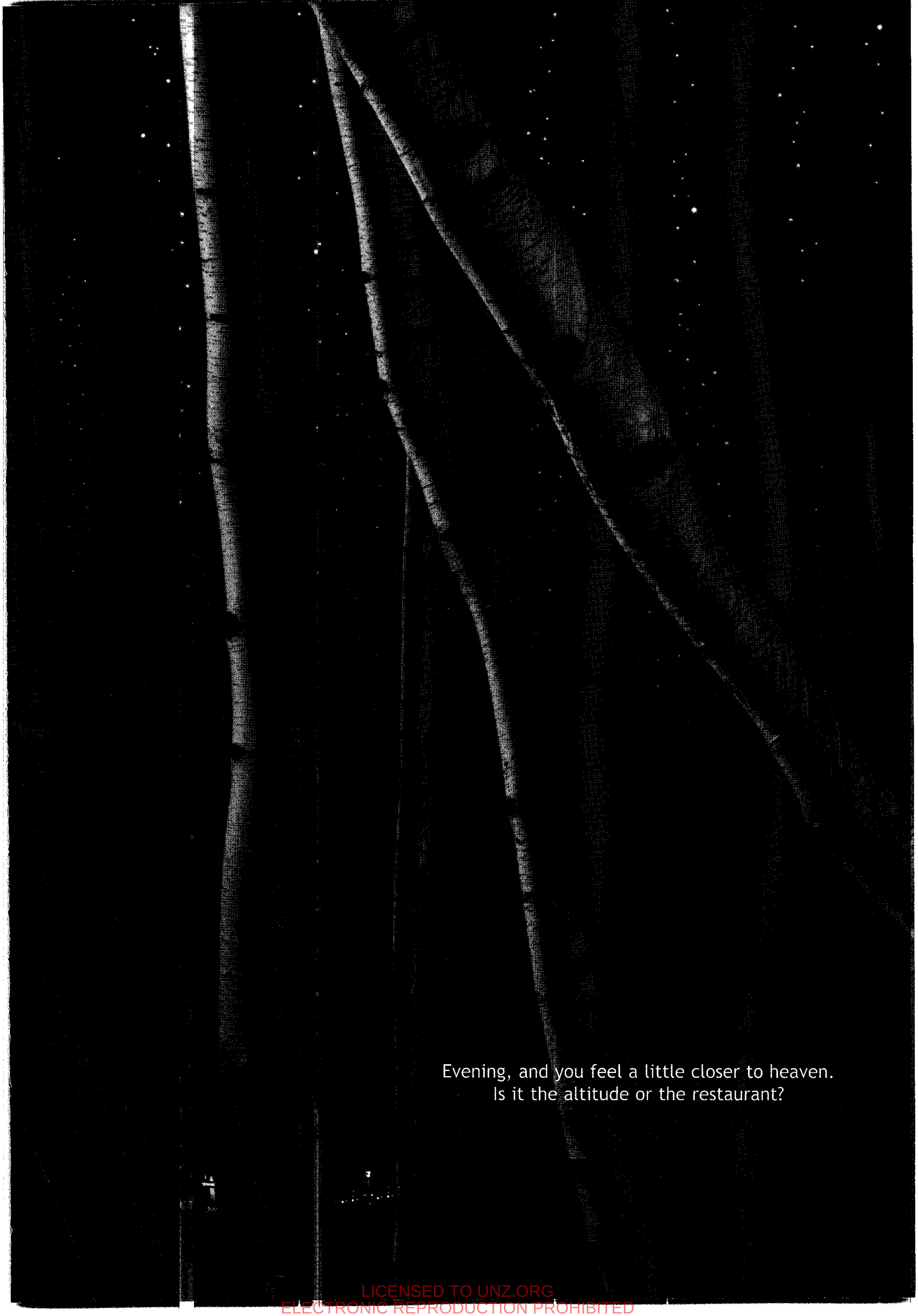
CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
April 13 at 8 and April 16 at 1:30: Julie Taymor's popular production of **"Die Zauberflöte"** returns for a brief spring run, with some new cast members, including Lisa Milne (as Pamina, making her Met début), René Pape, and Matthias Goerne. Also with Erika Miklósa, Matthew Polenzani, and Kurt Moll; James Levine conducts. ♦ April 14 and April 18 at 8: Deborah Voigt, going from strength to strength this season, takes the role of Amelia in a revival of **"Un Ballo in Maschera,"** joining Lyubov Petrova, Marianne Cornetti, Marcello Giordani, and Carlos Alvarez; James Conlon. ♦ April 15 at 8: The Franco Zeffirelli production of **"Tosca,"** with Salvatore Licitra, Maria Guleghina, and Frederick Burchinal; Conlon. ♦ April 16 at 8:30: Gerald Finley and Samuel Ramey lead the cast in a magnificent revival of **"Don Giovanni,"** as the Don and his manservant, Leporello; Tamar Iveri and Adina Nitescu are Donna Anna and Donna Elvira. Also with Isabel Bayrakdarian, Richard Croft, Jonathan Lemalu, and Paata Burchuladze; Philippe Jordan, a young Swiss conductor making a striking Met début, leads a powerfully symphonic conception of the score. (This is the final performance.) ♦ April 19 at 6:30: Placido Domingo returns to sing the role of Siegmund in **"Die Walküre,"** with a largely Russian cast that also includes Olga Sergeeva (in the title role), Katarina Dalayman, Larissa Diadkova, Mikhail Kit, and Stephen Milling; his good friend Valery Gergiev is in the pit. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
April 13 and April 19 at 7:30 and April 16 at 8: The Glimmerglass production of **"La Fanciulla del West,"** Puccini's noblest opera, comes downstate with Stephanie Friede, Renzo Zulian, and Stephen Kechulius in the leading roles; George Manahan, City Opera's music director, conducts. ♦ April 14 at 7:30 and April 16 at 1:30: A new production of Bizet's **"Les Pêcheurs de Perles,"** with Mary Dunleavy, Yegishe Manucharyan, Stephen Powell, and Brian McIntosh; Emmanuel Plasson, making his début, conducts. ♦ April 15 at 8: **"Madama Butterfly,"** with Jee Hyun Lim, Kathryn Friest, Marc Heller, and Michael Corvino; Atsushi Yamada. ♦ April 17 at 1:30: Jonathan Eaton's production of Bizet's *opus ultimum*, **"Carmen,"** elegantly reflects the opera's psychological shades of warmth and coolness, from its sun-washed Seville porticoes to its cavernous, garnet-draped tavern. Katharine Goeldner is a convincing Carmen, carefully raspy in the deepest notes and supple even in the highest; John Bellemer, in his début, intelligently interprets the role of Don José. Also with Melanie Vaccari and Malcolm MacKenzie; Gary Thor Wedow. (New York State Theatre. 212-307-4100.)


On the first morning, the silence
is shattered by screams. Yours.


One afternoon, you learn how to outrun e-mail.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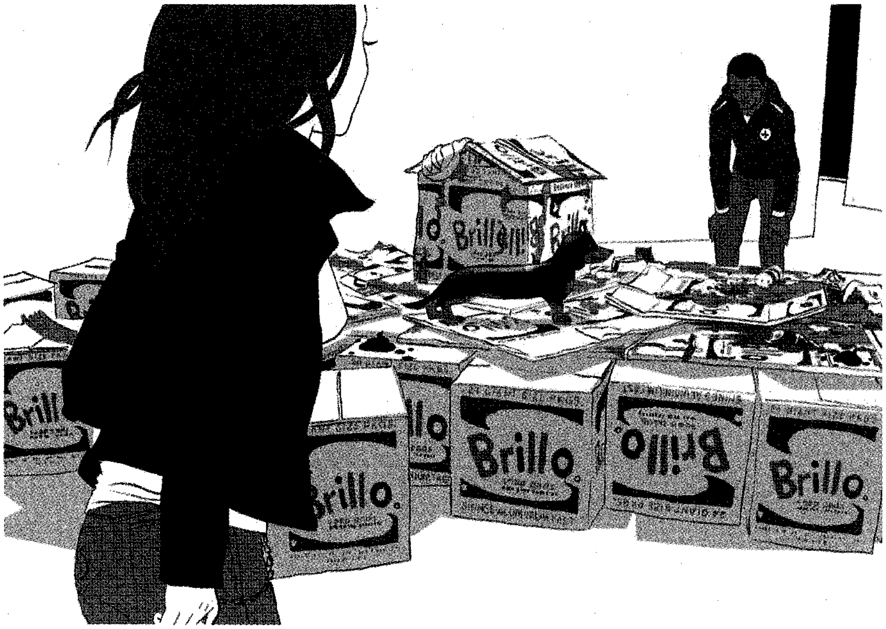
MICHAEL GORDON'S "VAN GOGH OPERA"
Ideas on money, women, painting, and madness, expressed via letter to the artist's brother Theo, form the texts for this Bang on a Can composer's new chamber opera. Clay Greenberg, Sarah Blaskowsky, and Matthew Hensrud sing it, accompanied by members of Alarm Will Sound, conducted by Alan Pierson. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. April 13 at 8.)

THE KITCHEN: "SHANGRI-LA"
Susie Ibarra has collaborated with the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Yusef Komunyakaa to write a chamber opera about the Bangkok sex trade, set for nine singers and twelve musicians playing a variety of Western and Asian instruments; Tania León conducts. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. April 15-16 at 8.)



Bertozzi & Casoni's ceramic sculptures, at Sperone Westwater (see Art).

TOMER HANUKA

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
The orchestra's five-week "Visions of the Beyond" festival comes to an august close, courtesy of the conductor Riccardo Muti, who leads performances of Liszt's "Faust" Symphony and the "Coro di Morti" by the fascinating Italian modernist icon Goffredo Petrassi. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. April 14 at 7:30 and April 15-16 at 8.)

"CELEBRATING JORDI SAVALL"
The conductor and gamba player, one of early music's most compelling talents, leads two final concerts in a festival given in his honor by the Metropolitan Museum. April 13 at 8: "Les Goûts Réunis," a program with Savall and his ensemble Le Concert des Nations, features music by L'Aisné, Leclair, Rameau, and Purcell (selections from "The Fairy Queen"). (Medieval Sculpture Hall.) ♦ April 18 at 8: The singers of La Capella Reial de Catalunya join Savall and Le Concert des Nations in settings of Cervantes by the composers Salinas, Martin y Coll, and others, along with a generous selection of Monteverdi's "Canti Guerrieri et Amorosi." (Temple of Dendur.) (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949.)

DRESDEN STAATSKAPELLE
Myung-Whun Chung conducts the storied German ensemble in two concerts. April 13 at 8: Emanuel Ax joins the orchestra for an all-Brahms program that includes the Second Piano Concerto and the Fourth Symphony. ♦ April 14 at 8: Two Beethoven symphonies—the Third ("Eroica") and the Sixth ("Pastoral"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC: "ODE TO JOY"
The world première of Jennifer Higdon's "Dooryard Bloom" (a Walt Whitman setting, with the baritone Nmon Ford) precedes a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, featuring (among others) the New York Virtuoso Singers and the soprano Helen Donath; Michael Christie, the young new music director of the Phoenix Symphony, conducts. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. April 16 at 8.)

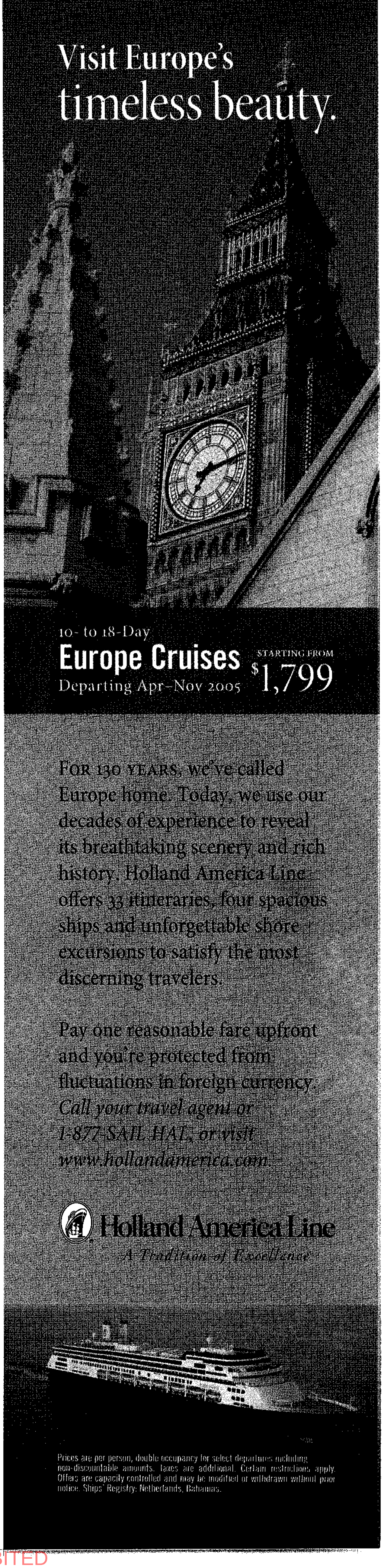
SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Much to everyone's relief, the orchestra has survived a protracted labor dispute to continue its season with its music director designate, David Robertson. They come to Carnegie Hall to offer a flag-waving program of Ives (the Symphony No. 2 and "The Unanswered Question"), Adams ("Century Rolls," with the pianist Orli Shaham), and Copland ("Lincoln Portrait," narrated by Paul Newman). (212-247-7800. April 16 at 8.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Leon Botstein takes his orchestra (along with the Concert Chorale of New York) into yet another undiscovered realm: the choral music of Richard Strauss (including "Austria," Op. 78), who is more celebrated for his operas and tone poems. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. April 17 at 3.)

RECITALS

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
April 13 at 8: Rejuvenation might be the theme for this concert by the Guarneri String Quartet (along with their former cellist, David Soyer), with quartets by Haydn (the "Sunrise") and Richard Danielpour ("In Search of La Vita Nuova") preceding Schubert's Quintet in C Major. ♦ April 17 at 5 and April 19 at 7:30: The society ends its season with the world première of the film composer Lalo Schifrin's "Letters from Argentina"—in which the clarinettist David Shifrin, the bassist Pablo Aslan, the violinist Cho-Liang Lin, and others will play tangos, gaucho tunes, and more. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788.)

BARGEMUSIC
A weekend with the violinist Mark Peskanov and the pianist Michel Bourdoncle. April 14-15 at 7:30: An all-Prokofiev program, including the two Violin Sonatas and the Piano Sonata No. 7. ♦ April 16 at 7:30 and April 17 at 4: Music by Milhaud, Brahms, and Stravinsky (the "Histoire du Soldat" Suite), with the clarinettist Dominique Vidal. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)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METROPOLITAN MUSEUM: A FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION WINNERS
Olga Kern, the winner of the 2001 Van Cliburn competition, leads off a four-day round of solo recitals given by six pianists from Israel and Europe with a program of music by Brahms, Shostakovich, and Rachmaninoff. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. April 14 at 8. For a full schedule, see www.metmuseum.org.)

LOOK AND LISTEN FESTIVAL
This four-year-old festival brings important musicians into the Robert Miller gallery, with works by the artist Jean-Paul Riopelle as a backdrop. Among the performers are the Lark Quartet, So Percussion, and the Meredith Monk Ensemble; the composers include Aaron Jay Kernis, George Perle, and Steve Reich. (524 W. 26th St. 718-622-6166. April 14-16. For details, see www.lookandlisten.org.)

The New York Institute of the Humanities presents "What's Up When Birds Sing?"

ANDREW BRANDOU

DAPONTE STRING QUARTET
David Del Tredici, the neo-Romantic master best known for his gargantuan orchestral works, has finally written a string quartet, which will be premièred by this up-and-coming ensemble; quartets by Schulhoff and Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2) complete the program. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 15 at 8.)

VIKTORIA MULLOVA
The Russian-born violinist, a solid player and a media darling of the nineteen-eighties, makes a belated Carnegie Hall recital début, performing music by Stravinsky (the "Suite Italienne"), Schubert, Ravel, and Dave Maric (a New York première). (212-247-7800. April 15 at 8.)

"THE THOMASHEFSKYS"
Michael Tilson Thomas hosts a concert tribute to his grandparents Boris and Bessie Thomashefsky, legends of the Yiddish theatre. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. April 16 at 7:30 and April 17 at 4.)

MILLER THEATRE: "SEPTETS AND OCTETS"
A distinguished tangle of musicians (including the violinist Scott St. John and the hornist William Purvis) perform music by Schubert and Schoenberg. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. April 16 at 8.)

AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE
A new group makes its début with a concert devoted to the young composer Robert Paterson; Paul Sperry, the éminence grise of contemporary art song, is the soloist in "Stepping Into the Batter's Box, He Hears His Father's Voice," a musical treatment of the national pastime. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. April 16 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ENSEMBLE WIEN-BERLIN
The violinist Gil Morgenstern, the bassoonist Frank Morelli, and other top New York freelancers join the renowned wind quintet for two concerts featuring music by such composers as Dvořák, Janáček, and Zemlinsky. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. April 16 at 8 and April 17 at 3.)

"TWO WOMEN'S LIVES AND LOVES"
A program of songs by Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wolf, and others, sung by the soprano Felicity Lott and the mezzo-soprano Angelika Kirchschlager; Eugene Asti accompanies them. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. April 17 at 2.)

NACHTMUSIQUE
Eric Hoeprich's wind ensemble makes its New York début at the Frick Collection (see This Week). (1 E. 70th St. 212-288-0700. April 17 at 5.)

"FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL": ANNE-SOFIE VON OTTER
The regal Swedish mezzo-soprano opens the third season of this on-a-shoestring Town Hall series, singing music by Mozart, Haydn, and Schubert with her regular accompanist, Bengt Forsberg. (123 W. 43rd St. April 17 at 5. Free tickets, with a limit of two per person, are available beginning at noon on the day of the concert.)

CHARLES WUORINEN'S "ASHBERYANA"
New York's inescapable modernist conducts the baritone Leon Williams, members of the Brentano String Quartet, and others in his monumental new setting of four poems from John Ashbery's collection "Wakefulness." (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. April 17-18 at 8.)

KRYSTIAN ZIMERMAN
Technical mastery and magisterial restraint are the hallmarks of the superb Polish pianist, who offers a concert of Mozart, Ravel ("Valses Nobles et Sentimentales"), and Chopin (the Sonata in B-Flat Minor) at Carnegie Hall. (212-247-7800. April 18 at 8.)

EMERSON STRING QUARTET
The renowned quartet brings its Mendelssohn cycle to a close, inviting the St. Lawrence String Quartet to join it in a program including the composer's Quartets Nos. 5 and 6, with the beloved Octet as the grand finale. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. April 19 at 7:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

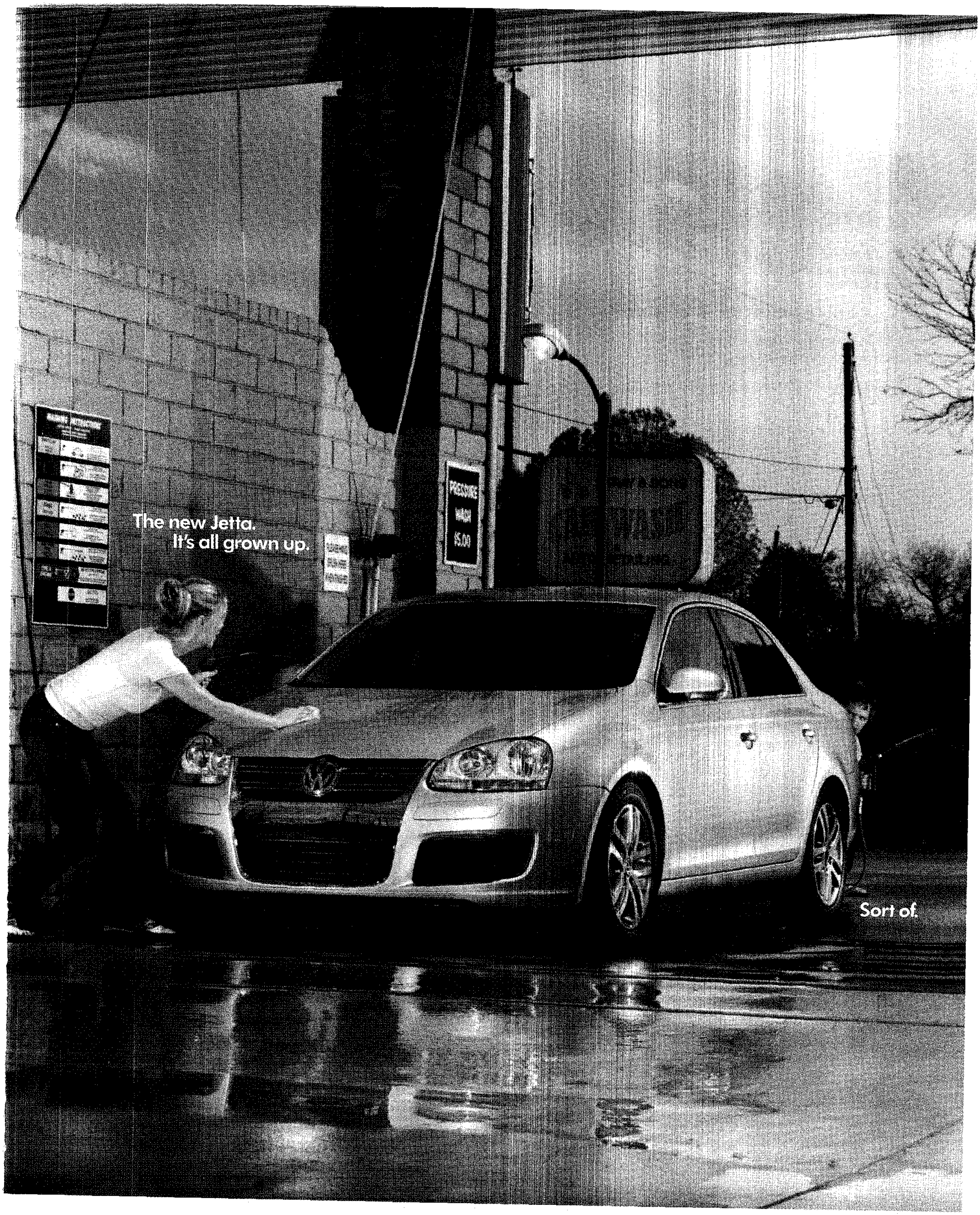
"LITERARY UPSTART"
The L Magazine, a guide to New York City, is running a competitive fiction-reading series, in which aspiring writers are judged "American Idol"-style by a set of publishing-world insiders. The inaugural season continues on April 14 at 8, with four new authors. The judges are Ben Greenman, an editor at this magazine; Coates Bateman, an editor at Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; Peter Steinberg, a literary agent; and Rebecca Schuman, a columnist for *The L Magazine.* And, as on "American Idol," there are no real losers—writers who submit a story in a timely fashion get a free drink. (The Baggot Inn, 82 W. 3rd St. For more information, and to read the stories in advance, visit www.thelmagazine.com.)

"TEN AFTER ELEVEN"
The broadcast of an original radio drama by Theresa Rebeck that was inspired by the murder of Kitty Genovese, which took place on March 13, 1964. The readers include Marlo Thomas, Lili Taylor, Dan Lauria, and Fisher Stevens. A collaboration between the Naked Angels Theatre Company and WNYC Radio's "Next Big Thing." (April 16 from 2 to 3 on AM 820 and April 17 from 11 A.M. to noon on 93.9 FM.)

"WHAT'S UP WHEN BIRDS SING?"
The New York Institute of the Humanities and New York City Audubon address one of springtime's more pressing questions in a symposium hosted by David Rothenberg, a musician and philosopher who has played the clarinet alongside birds in the National Aviary, in Pittsburgh, and who recently published the book "Why Birds Sing." He is joined by Lang Elliot, the author of "Music of the Birds"; Don Kroodsma, a field biologist who specializes in birdsong; the musician Pamela Z; the sound artist Michael Pestel; the composer Eric Salzman; the writer Breyten Breytenbach; and others. (Hemmerdinger Hall, New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E. For more information, call 212-998-2100. April 16 from 4 to 7.)

READINGS
April 13 at 7: Gary Shteyngart, the author of "The Russian Debutante's Handbook," reads from his new novel, "Absurdistan"; he is joined by Joshua Cohen, who will read from his story "The Trial." (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ April 12 at 7: Matthew Stover offers selections from "Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith," his novel based on the screenplay for the upcoming George Lucas film. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
April 12 at 6: Journalists from the United States and Europe discuss arts coverage on opposite sides of the Atlantic. The participants include Jane Kramer, a writer for this magazine who splits her time between New York and Paris; Hector Feliciano, a New York-based culture writer for *El País*; and Jordan Mejias, the United States correspondent for the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.* (Graduate School of Journalism Lecture Hall, 3rd fl., Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. No tickets necessary. For reservations, which are required, contact alc60@columbia.edu.) ♦ April 19 at 6:30: Tom Hill, a conservationist who lives part-time in Kenya, talks about saving the endangered African lion. (Explorers Club, 46 E. 70th St. 212-628-8383.)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MOVIES OPENING

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
A remake of the horror film. Directed by Andrew Douglas. Opening April 15.

HOUSE OF D
The directorial début of David Duchovny, in which he plays an artist in Prague looking back on his unusual Greenwich Village childhood. With Robin Williams and Téa Leoni. Opening April 15. (Lincoln Square.)

IT'S ALL GONE PETE TONG
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening April 15.

PALINDROMES
In a drama by Todd Solondz, a thirteen-year-old girl wants to become a mother. With Ellen Barkin. Opening April 13. (Angelika Film Center.)

SHORT CUT TO NIRVANA: KUMBH MELA
A documentary about a spiritual festival in India, directed by Nick Day and Maurizio Benazzo. In English and Hindi. Opening April 15. (Sunshine Cinema.)

STATE PROPERTY 2
Damon Dash directed this action-adventure film, about rival crime lords in Philadelphia. Opening April 13.

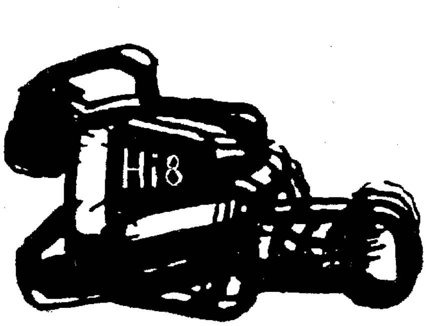
TORREMOLINOS 73
A Spanish man and his wife become unlikely porn stars, in a comedy directed by Pablo Berger. In Spanish and Danish. Opening April 15. (Cinema Village.)

FILM NOTES

THE BALLAD OF JACK & ROSE
Naïvely bad. Daniel Day-Lewis, gaunt, pale, and wearing an awful little hat, plays an aging, arrogant counterculture environmentalist living on an island in 1986 in perfect harmony with his teen-age daughter (Camilla Belle). He brings his mainland girlfriend (Catherine Keener) and her two sons into the house, and everything goes haywire. There are stupid quarrels, a loaded gun that goes off, a snake that comes out from under the bed when two of the kids fornicate. Everything is shot so close in that you can't actually see the actors half the time. Nothing that the hero does makes much sense—the movie seems to be an exposure of his futility. This awkwardly stupid mess was written and directed by Rebecca Miller, who is Day-Lewis's wife; Miller seems to have plugged all too successfully into the actor's self-mortifying side. With Beau Bridges as a real-estate developer.—*David Denby* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Street Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Sunshine Cinema.)

BORN INTO BROTHELS
Watching Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's prize-winning documentary, shot in Calcutta's Sonagachi red-light district, where Briski lived, on and off, for years, one is initially held by the sensuousness of the colors and the beauty of the children—the offspring of prostitutes, eight, nine, twelve years old, who are growing up in the district and are surely heading into prostitution themselves. Then the "plot" of the movie kicks in. Briski gives the children cameras and teaches them to take pictures of their surroundings; they gain a sense of themselves, and they master a craft. But will Briski be able to get them out of the brothels (where their parents need them for economic reasons) and into decent schools? One is aware of Briski as a rather aggressive guardian angel from the West, who comes in and tries to save only a few children, but she's hardheaded and effective, and her quest makes sense.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Twin, and Village East Cinemas.)

BRIDE AND PREJUDICE
Ridiculous, but immensely enjoyable. Jane Austen's most enduringly popular story done as a Bollywood musical comedy, with Martin Henderson as Darcy, a callow American millionaire, and the ravishing Aishwarya Rai as the smartly alert Elizabeth Bennet figure, known here as Lalita, one of four highly nubile daughters living in Amritsar. The ballroom scene is turned into a sprightly Bollywood production number; in the street bazaars, cross-dressers and goofy guys with turbans break into dance. It's a travesty, of course, but also an exuberant, amiable movie, and it won't corrupt you or Jane Austen. Directed by Gurinder Chadha.—*D.D.* (First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)



CHRONICLE OF A SUMMER
In 1960, the sociologist Edgar Morin approached Jean Rouch, who had reinvented the ethnographic documentary by filming his African subjects' self-dramatizations, about doing the same for Parisians, simply by asking them, on camera, "Are you happy?" The results are a shock. The filmmakers first show their preliminary discussions with Marceline, the young woman who will conduct their interviews, and as she speaks to them of her life as a survivor of Auschwitz her story begins to take over the film. Rouch and Morin create a stream of cinematic consciousness, joining images of her solitary wanderings through the city to her anguished recollections of her family's wartime sufferings and her father's death. Five years earlier, in "Night and Fog," Alain Resnais had shown the Holocaust to have been largely forgotten in France. Rouch and Morin exposed the inner cost of that collective silence, with a brilliant twist on their film's premise: if the French were neurotically unhappy, it wasn't only because of their repressed desire but also because of their repressed history. In French.—*Richard Brody* (Moving Image; April 17.)

DOWNFALL
The great Swiss-German actor Bruno Ganz gives a staggering performance as Adolf Hitler in this full-scale realist German production detailing the last ten days of the Third Reich. As the Red Army rampages through Berlin, Hitler and his staff have retreated to the bunker under the Reich Chancellery. They are all here—Himmler, Goebbels, Speer, the entire fascinating, loathsome crew of commanders, mad visionaries, and toadies (all brilliantly acted)—and, leading them still, a man so physically ill and constricted in movement that he looks like a broken-down puppet from a Bavarian travelling circus. The puppet comes to life, of course, in appalling self-pitying rants that are borderline funny. The entire movie teeters on the edge of sick comedy—in particular such scenes as the deaths of the Goebbels children, one by one, at the hands of their mother—and at times one longs for a coldly malicious ironist like Brecht or Fassbinder to come in and take over. Produced and written by Bernd Eichinger; directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel. In German.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 2/14 & 21/05.) (Film Forum.)

FEVER PITCH
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, and Union Square.)

GUESS WHO
Any similarity between this movie and "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" is strictly coincidental. Ashton Kutcher plays a successful stockbroker who quits his job the day before he and his fiancée (Zoë Saldaña) are scheduled to travel to the New Jersey suburbs to meet her parents (Bernie Mac and Judith Scott). The tired complications of the plot are knocked off without benefit of ingenuity, believability, insight—or laughs. If there's any emotional or intellectual juice left in the subjects of interracial marriage and liberal hypocrisy, it's not to be found here. This is a movie made in a boardroom, a merger of Bernie-Ashton demographics.—*Ken Marks* (Battery Park 11, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Magic Johnson Theatres, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

HEAD-ON
Set first in Hamburg and then in Istanbul, Fatih Akin's new film traces the curious rapport between the sullen Cahit (Birol Ünel) and the flaky, lustrous Sibel (Sibel Güner). In a way, theirs is a love story in reverse: they set off in mistrust, move to indifference, slide into a marriage of convenience, begin to notice and value one another, and finally ascend to a state of ineradicable need. Even then, fortune dams their happiness; Akin's movie may be enlivened by a savage energy, but beneath it flows a quiet and rueful pessimism. He has delved into an obvious place—the predicament of Turkish workers in modern Germany—and come up with a consuming tale, forcing us to wonder why directors in the U.S. aren't turning to their own immigrant communities and finding similar treasures. In German and Turkish.—*Anthony Lane* (3/14/05) (Village East Cinemas.)

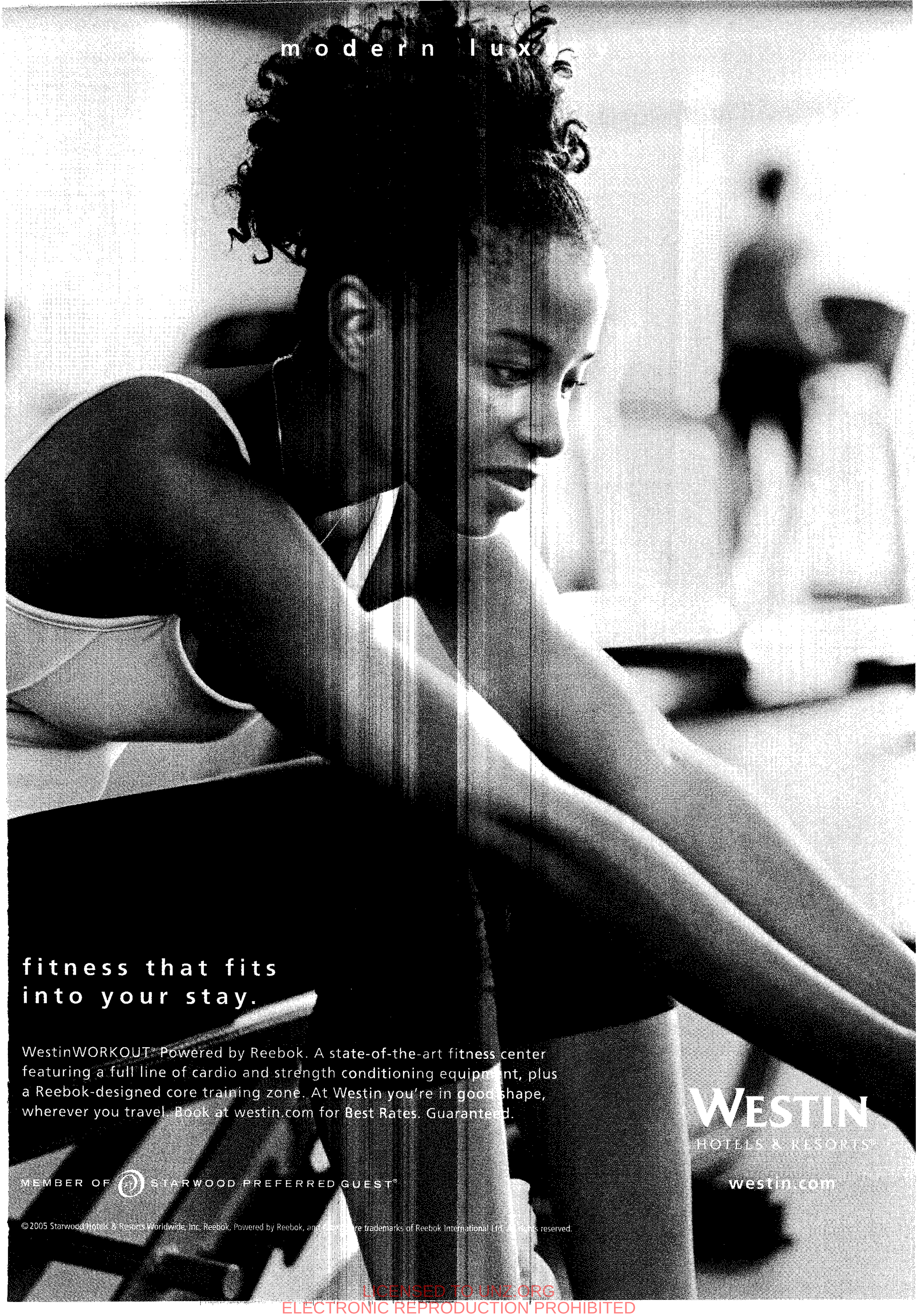
A HOLE IN MY HEART
A venal and fractious chamber piece from the young Swedish director Lukas Moodysson. Most of it is set in an apartment, where Rickard (Thorsten Flinck), a flabby chunk of self-loathing, is shooting a pornographic film, to the disgust of his teen-age son Eric (Björn Almroth). The starring couple (Sanna Bråding and Goran Marjanović) are equally shaken souls, and their attempts at the blitheness of bodily pleasure grind to a dreadful halt. Indeed, the film works so hard to drain all pleasure from the wells of desire—we see more gynecological surgery than we do actual sex—that you wind up feeling bullied and bored. Despite some overwhelming moments (listen, especially, for a grave blast of the St. Matthew Passion), this is a major disappointment from Moodysson, whose last two movies, "Together" and "Lilya 4-Ever," treated the difficult lives of their characters with a tenderness that is brutally absent from his latest work. In Swedish.—*A.L.* (4/11/05) (Cinema Village.)

IT'S ALL GONE PETE TONG
The cautionary, seamy, and putatively inspiring legend of an English dance-music d.j. called Frankie Wilde. The action is set in Ibiza in the nineties, with Wilde as the king of the club scene. The movie, which swerves manically between pseudodocumentary and pure hallucination, chronicles Wilde's descent into total deafness, a condition fast-forwarded by a life style that includes consumption of mass quantities of Scotch and cocaine, and, of course, constant exposure to high-decibel beats. The writer-director, Michael Dowse, displays a colorful flair, and Paul Kaye plays Frankie with crazed abandon. There is a third act showing Wilde's redemption (he gets clean, finds true love, and learns how to d.j. by feeling the beats through his bare feet), but most of the movie consists of tiresome scenes of self-abuse, and it's hard to warm to a picture in which the hero's coke demon is embodied by a guy in a snot-nosed badger suit.—*K.M.* (Union Square.)

KONTROLL
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center.)

KUNG FU HUSTLE
The director Stephen Chow (he also wrote, produced, and stars) assembled this fantastic martial-arts film as cleverly as Tex Avery approached animation. Characters run down the road at superspeed, take flowerpots to the head without a whimper, and fly through the air deliriously. The plot, about a group of over-the-hill, tenement-living kung-fu masters with superpowers who fight a group of axe-wielding gangsters, is anarchic; the cast of Hong Kong actors is comic perfection, especially Yuen Qiu (who plays a hair-curlered, cigarette-smoking landlady). And there's a vibrant, back-lot-moviemaking feel to the film that never feels labored. The computer-enhanced stunt work is astonishing, but it's Chow's ability to find the humor in his flights of fancy that's truly distinctive.—*Bruce Diones* (Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

LOOK AT ME
In this wonderful new film by the team of Agnès Jaoui (who acts, writes, and directs) and Jean-Pierre Bacri (who acts and writes), Bacri is a Parisian big-shot publisher and writer, and young Marilou Berri is his grievously overweight and unloved daughter, who can't get past a disco bouncer but attains something like happiness when she sings Handel and Mozart with her choral group. Around this aggravated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father-daughter vacuum, Jaoui and Bacri assemble the elements of the Parisian publishing and music worlds, and their theme is egocentricity—the unconscious selfishness that cuts people off even from those they are closest to. Bacri's big cheese, a monster of self-centeredness, is the villain of the piece, but the condition is shown to be universal. A tender, indignant, but also very worldly movie.—*D.D.* (4/4/05) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

MAJOR DUNDEE

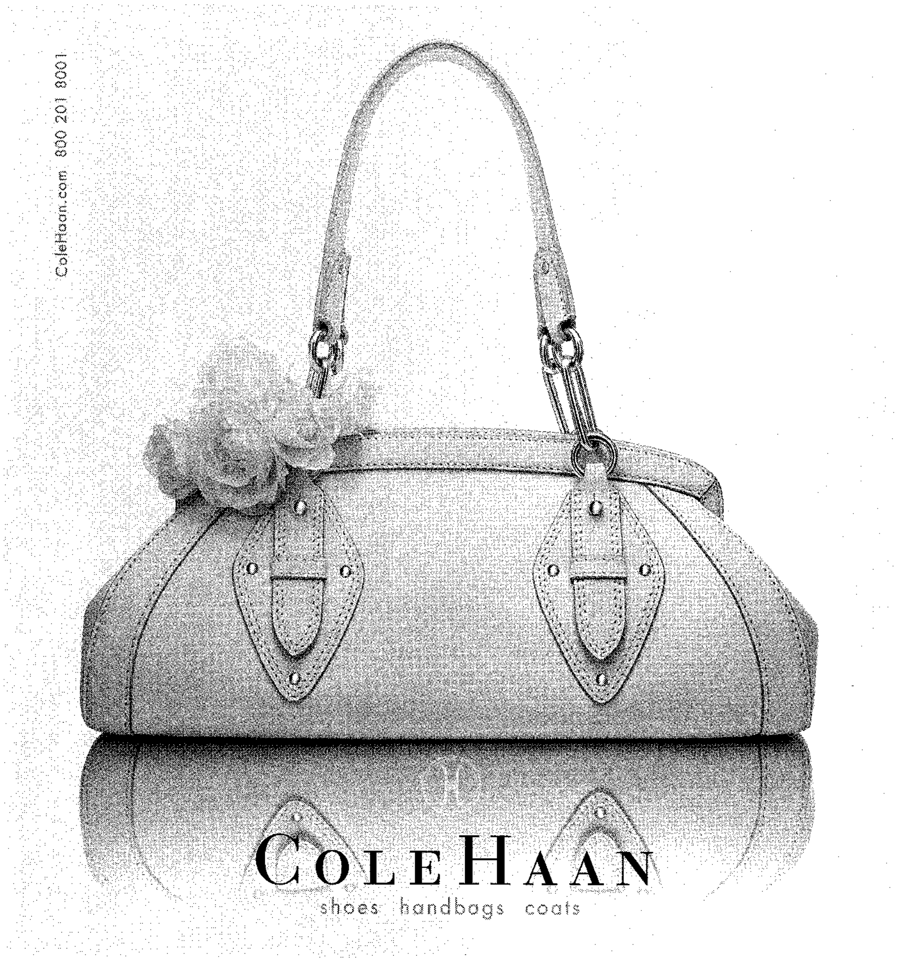
Sam Peckinpah's Civil War tale of a New Mexico prison-garrison commandant (Charlton Heston) who starts his own campaign against a murderous Apache chief expresses a kaleidoscopic ambivalence toward violence and power. Dundee's quest encompasses Indian scouts, Confederate prisoners serving side by side with Union men (including blacks), and a host of unlikely enemies and allies South of the Border, from easily bamboozled French lancers to a beautiful German doctor's widow (Senta Berger) ministering to starving Mexican villagers. Mangled by the studio upon its 1965 release, this epic is now more lucid and spine-tingling, not to mention longer than the original release by a dozen minutes. But on the human scale it's still frustrating and opaque, partly because the director couldn't resolve whether the lead character is a monomaniac, an opportunist, or a mythic hero—and wasn't yet the movie master who could make him all three. Still, the movie's visual whoosh and romantic gestures are tremendously enjoyable. Peckinpah deploys his troops like a visionary general: it's thrilling to see them make their mark on a land that's always on the verge of swallowing them up. The spectacular wide-screen cinematography of Sam Leavitt draws you in, as well as the push-pull chemistry of Heston at his most stoically magnetic and Richard Harris at his most gallant and unpredictable as the top Confederate officer (and Dundee's former friend). The wily supporting cast includes James Coburn, Ben Johnson, Warren Oates, Slim Pickens, Brock Peters, and L. Q. Jones. Christopher Caliendo wrote the new musical score.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; April 13-19.)

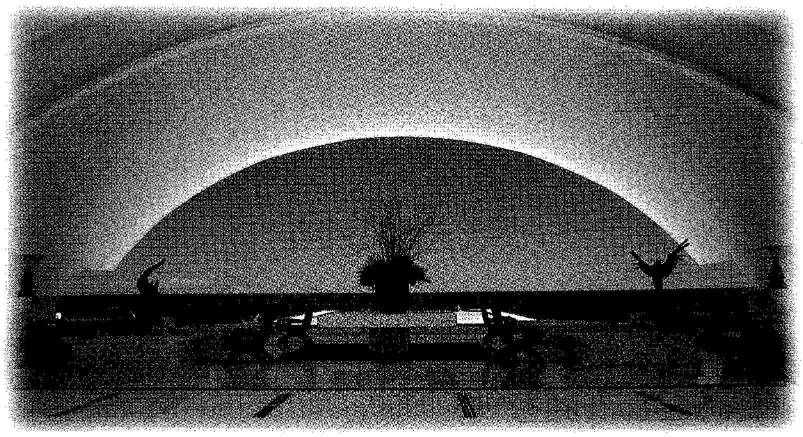
MELINDA AND MELINDA

At dinner with friends in a Greenwich Village restaurant, two playwrights, one tragic (Larry Pine), one comic (Wallace Shawn), offer alternate versions of the same story: Melinda (Radha Mitchell), a distraught young woman, shows up, unannounced, at a dinner party held by old friends and intrudes upon their lives. The dramatic framework of Woody Allen's new movie is ambitious, but an odd sort of indifference or blindness seems to have overcome him during production. Mitchell is surrounded by different actors in each version, but it's surprisingly hard to tell the two stories apart. The general atmosphere of both stories and even some of the characters are very similar: both are set in Woodyland, that familiar elegant fantasy version of Manhattan, impeccably furnished, with no brightness, no neon, no pop culture anywhere, and the characters are largely a nattering, trivial, shallowly self-serving bunch. Mitchell is a fine young actress, but Allen pushes her so far into the fidgets that one rather dreads her next appearance. One leaves with such sour thoughts as, The inability to pull oneself together is neither tragic nor comic; it's just a waste of energy. With Will Ferrell, Amanda Peet, Jonny Lee Miller, and Chloë Sevigny.—*D.D.* (3/21/05) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

MILLIONS

In a surprisingly sunny suburb of Manchester, two motherless little boys—one pious and generous (Alex Etel), the other enterprising and manipulative (Lewis McGibbon)—gain control of a Nike bag filled with cash after thieves throw it off a moving train. Will the secretive boys invest the money, give it to the poor, spend it on video games? And when will the nasty blackguards who stole the money show up, eager to recover the swag? "Millions," written by Frank Cottrell Boyce and directed by Danny Boyle, should have had the enchantment of "Empire of the Sun" or the recent Italian film "I'm Not Scared" or a dozen other child-centered stories and movies, but Boyle can't stop showing off his virtuosity. He changes camera speeds, zips through sequences, sends things





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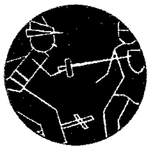

IN LIKE FLYNN

No film star ever bettered Errol Flynn in tights, but he was the soul of insouciance even when he wore a cavalry uniform or bluejeans. That's the revelation of **"Errol Flynn: The Signature Collection"** (Warner Home Video), which features the athletic, rakish star not just as an inspired Sir Francis Drake take-off in the vivid "The Sea Hawk" (1940) and as an uncharacteristically stiff Earl of Essex in "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (1939) but also as a gallant General George A. Custer in "They Died with Their Boots On" (1941) and as a gritty frontier sheriff in the colorful Western potboiler "Dodge City" (1939). The set includes a surprisingly frank biographical portrait, "The Adventures of Errol Flynn."

But the key film in the set is the sweeping, ebullient swashbuckler "Captain Blood" (1935). Three years before he became the most dashing Robin Hood yet (in "The Adventures of Robin Hood," available on a separate Warner DVD), the young Australian actor, in his Hollywood breakthrough, proved his panache at righting wrongs. In this film, based on Rafael Sabatini's 1922 novel about seventeenth-century pirates of the Caribbean and directed by Michael Curtiz, Flynn is Peter Blood, a peaceful doctor who makes the mistake of treating a rebel during the tumultuous reign of King James II and ends up a slave in Jamaica. The ravishing Olivia de Havilland (Flynn's frequent co-star) plays the feisty, sympathetic niece of the tyrannical British slave owner; Blood and a barracksful of enslaved rebels (good men all) make their escape by stealing a Spanish ship and becoming buccaneers.

Flynn combined aristocratic dash with rebel flair—in "Captain Blood," he defies the ruling order with absolute confidence. At one point, de Havilland says, "I believe you're talking treason." Flynn replies, "I hope I'm not obscure." (This exchange has a close echo in "Robin Hood," when de Havilland exclaims, "You speak treason!" and Flynn responds, "Fluently.") In his autobiography, "My Wicked, Wicked Ways," Flynn wrote that "youthful and virile roles" like cowboys and swordsmen "require gusto and genuine interest—such as I had felt at the time I was making 'Captain Blood' and 'Robin Hood.' " He's right: in these movies, his exuberance irradiates the screen.

—*Michael Sragow*

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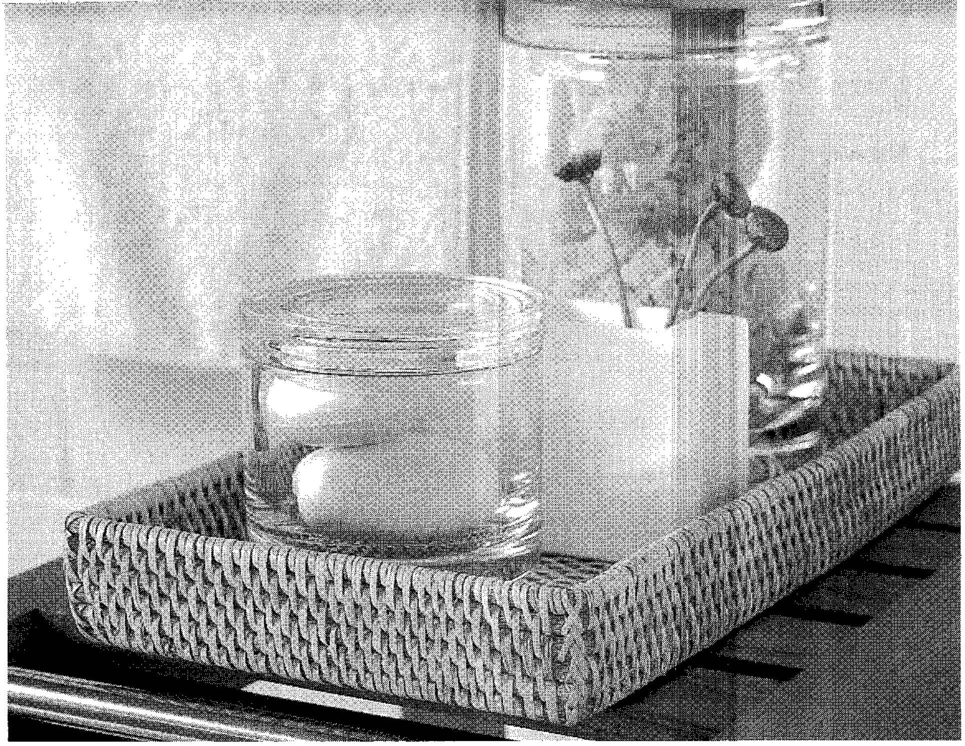
flying through the air. We're supposed to be overwhelmed by magic, but what we see is fancy film technique and a lot of overstrained whimsy. To use special effects without coming off as glib, you may have to be a boy at heart yourself.—*D.D.* (3/21/05) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

NANOOK OF THE NORTH

Robert Flaherty, who began as an explorer and anthropologist, once remarked that in the usual travelogue the filmmaker looks down on and never up to his subject. By looking up, Flaherty created a new genre. He began to record the life of a people with a camera, and then, in editing, to distill the meaning. What Flaherty—a great storyteller—distilled was the heroic beauty in simple everyday experience. Instead of going to a culture with a story, he developed his stories out of what he observed; his films have no human villains, yet they have great drama and a surprising amount of comedy. (Like all great documentarians, he imparts his own spirit to his films.) His feature-length study of the Eskimo Nanook, who lives where nothing grows and who depends on what he can kill, was made in 1920 and 1921. Two years later, while people all over the world were applauding this smiling man in his cold and hostile environment,



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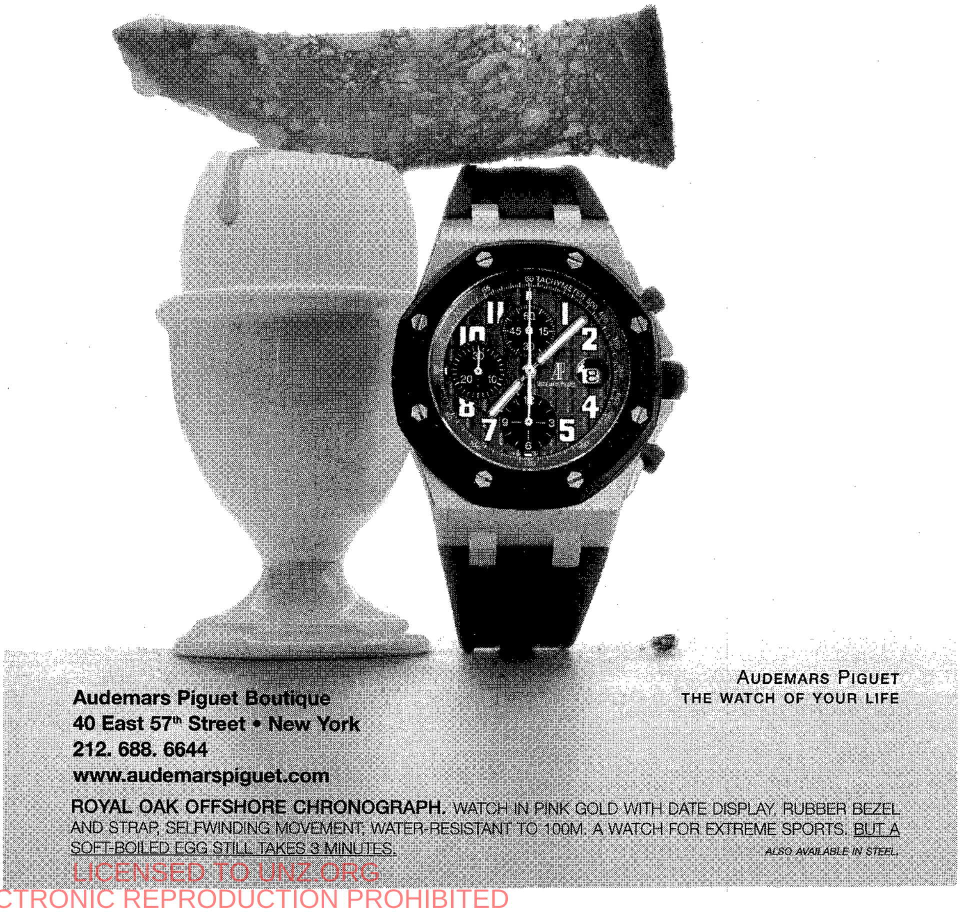

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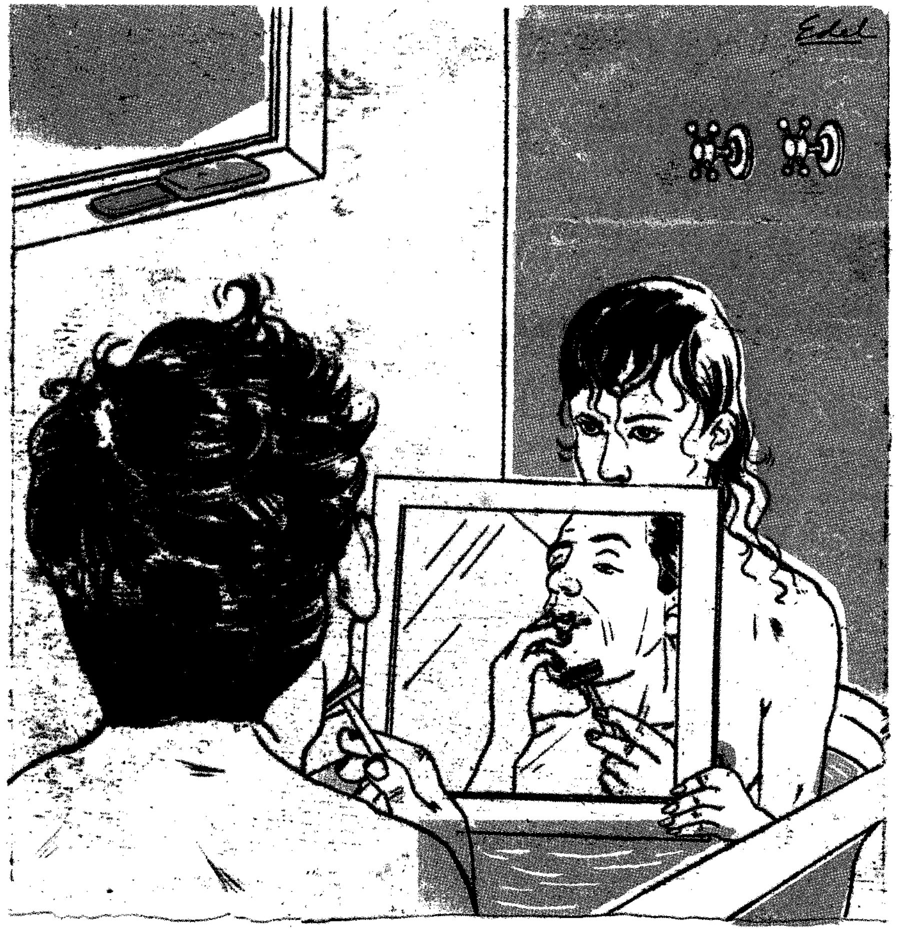
ALSO AVAILABLE IN STEEL.

Flaherty's hero died of starvation. He lives on in this movie in a different way from screen actors of the past: Flaherty closes the distance between Nanook and the audience. Silent.—*Pauline Kael* (Anthology Film Archives, April 16; Moving Image, April 17.)

OLDBOY

A man named Oh Dae-su (Choi Min-sik) is imprisoned in a room for fifteen years, not by the state but by the anonymous bearer of a grudge. On his release, he goes in search of revenge, with the aid of a fetching sushi chef. Upon this unusual plot, which manages to seem at once slender and wholly implausible, the South Korean director Park Chanwook has constructed a highly wrought, low-lit piece of gothic, worrying away at our senses without pausing to check that his story makes any sense. Scenes branch off one from another in a gruelling phantasmagoria that is best approached in a spirit of bitter comedy, or after a few drinks; if you want to follow the progress of subcutaneous insects, or to see a man ingest a live octopus, then this is the movie for you. There is no doubting the finesse of the director's eye, or the calmness with which even his most savage sequences are composed, but the result feels unappealingly pleased with itself, trapped in its obligation to shock. As for the solution to the mystery, don't wait up. In Korean.—*A.L.* (3/28/05) (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)



"9 Songs," a sexually explicit love story directed by Michael Winterbottom, at the Tribeca Film Festival, which runs April 19 through May 1.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

THE RING TWO

A sequel to the horror hit of 2002, with Naomi Watts returning to the role—demanding, yet drab and oddly fruitless—of Rachel Keller, a single mother with a freaky son (David Dorfman). They have moved to a small town to get away from a long-haired ghost named Samara (Kelly Stables), who made their life hell in the previous movie and who now, needless to say, wastes no time whatsoever in rolling up to finish what she started. What you get for your money is a brace of decent shocks, a spray of special effects (look out for the upward-raining bathwater), and almost no sense of dread. This is a great shame, because the director is Hideo Nakata, who made the two original "Ringu" movies in Japan in the late nineteen-nineties, and whose command of atmosphere—invariably dark, moist, and clouded with premonition—seemed instinctive enough to survive a change of location. But something in the American project foils or escapes him, and the new work tends to plod where it should shiver and creep. With Sissy Spacek as the patient in a psychiatric institution who Tells Us What It All Means.—*A.L.* (3/28/05) (Battery Park 11, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Magic Johnson Theatres, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

SAHARA

Clive Cussler's franchise novel about the adventurers Dirk Pitt (Matthew McConaughey) and Al Giordino (Steve Zahn) gets the big-bucks treatment in the director Breck Eisner's Indiana Jones-style romp. The overstuffed plot, a Cussler trademark, concerns a missing Civil War ship, a beautiful W.H.O. doctor (Penélope Cruz), and, of course, buried treasure. McConaughey gives Pitt an irresistible masculine charm and energy that helps link the plot together, and Zahn brings a joyous, look-at-me spontaneity to the action. Their performances complement and support each other, and Eisner, who has a great eye for location and detail, keeps the whole whirligig plot turning with lots of pop and lots of corn. A treat.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Magic Johnson Theatres, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

SIN CITY

A few strands of melodrama have been pulled from Frank Miller's graphic novels and plaited together—just about—into a coherent comic-strip film. Miller himself co-directs, in collaboration with Robert Rodriguez (plus a little help from Quentin Tarantino), and there is certainly no letup, or pulled punches, in the heightening of style. The movie is in monochrome, splashed with occasional color, and the sheer force of overkill—the ear-crunching sound level, the disturbingly joyful violence—turns a sequence of horrific events into a stream of unfeeling comedy. The plots offer vengeance upon vengeance: cops against child-killers, cops against priests, hookers against cops, thugs against everybody. The cast is a blast, including Bruce Willis, Michael Madsen, Clive Owen, Benicio Del Toro, a bewitching Carla Gugino, and a renascent Mickey Rourke. Most of them enter with sweat and gusto into the spirit of the thing—fortunately so, for without such eagerness the movie would feel merely cruel. What it has to tell us of life, let alone suffering, beyond the savage enchantment of the movies could be written on the head of a bullet.—*A.L.* (4/11/05) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Magic Johnson Theatres, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE UPSIDE OF ANGER

Joan Allen, lurching into rooms and then speaking with the weird explicitness of an alcoholic trying to maintain control, is Terry Wolfmeyer, a suburban housewife who has been abandoned by her husband; Kevin Costner is Denny Davis, a sheepish retired baseball player whose hand always clutches a beer bottle. She's overdefined; he's undefined; and in the gaps between Terry's faltering attempts to raise her four beautiful, cranky daughters, Terry and Denny have an occasional meeting in bed. This domestic comedy, written and directed by Mike Binder (who performs well as Denny's sleazebag friend), takes its time and establishes a natural rhythm of quarrels, reconciliations, and serious talk. As the rancorous Terry, who can't stop herself from telling people off, Allen blooms into a great angry comedienne. With Evan Rachel Wood, Erika Christensen, Keri Russell, and Alicia Witt as the fab Wolfmeyer girls.—*D.D.* (4/4/05) (Battery Park 11, Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

WALK ON WATER

Eyal (Lior Ashkenazi), a hard-bitten and sardonic Mossad agent whose job normally entails such things as assassinating Palestinian terrorists, gets assigned to two young Germans visiting Israel—Axel (Knut Berger) and Pia (Caroline Peters), a brother and sister whose flower-child tolerance infuriates Eyal. Yet he takes the assignment: the grandfather of these two is an unimaginably ancient Nazi war criminal living in Argentina, and the Mossad wants the old man dead. This gentle but ambitious Israeli film, directed by Eytan Fox and written by Gal Uchovsky, is a political thriller that turns into a moral fable. Axel, who is gay, and as openhearted as Eyal is embittered—Ashkenazi, who has the heavy lids and five-o'clock shadow of Clive Owen, is a suitably inexorable presence—pulls the agent out of his shell, and the movie, in Axel's spirit of reconciliation, tries to put an end to the Nazi era once and for all and also end the Israeli insistence on vengeance. In English, German, and Hebrew.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Twin.)

ALSO PLAYING

BEAUTY SHOP

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THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
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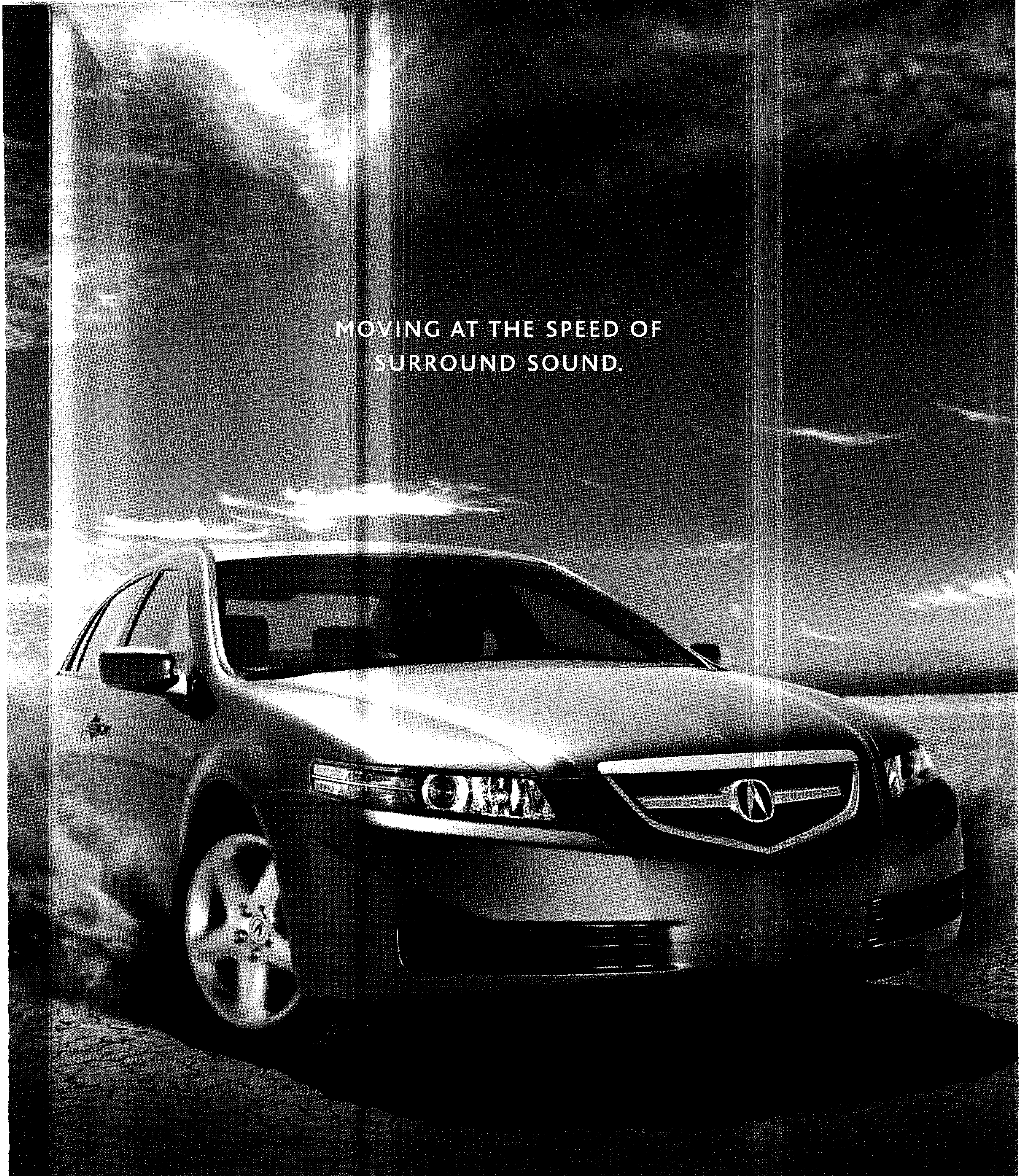
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.



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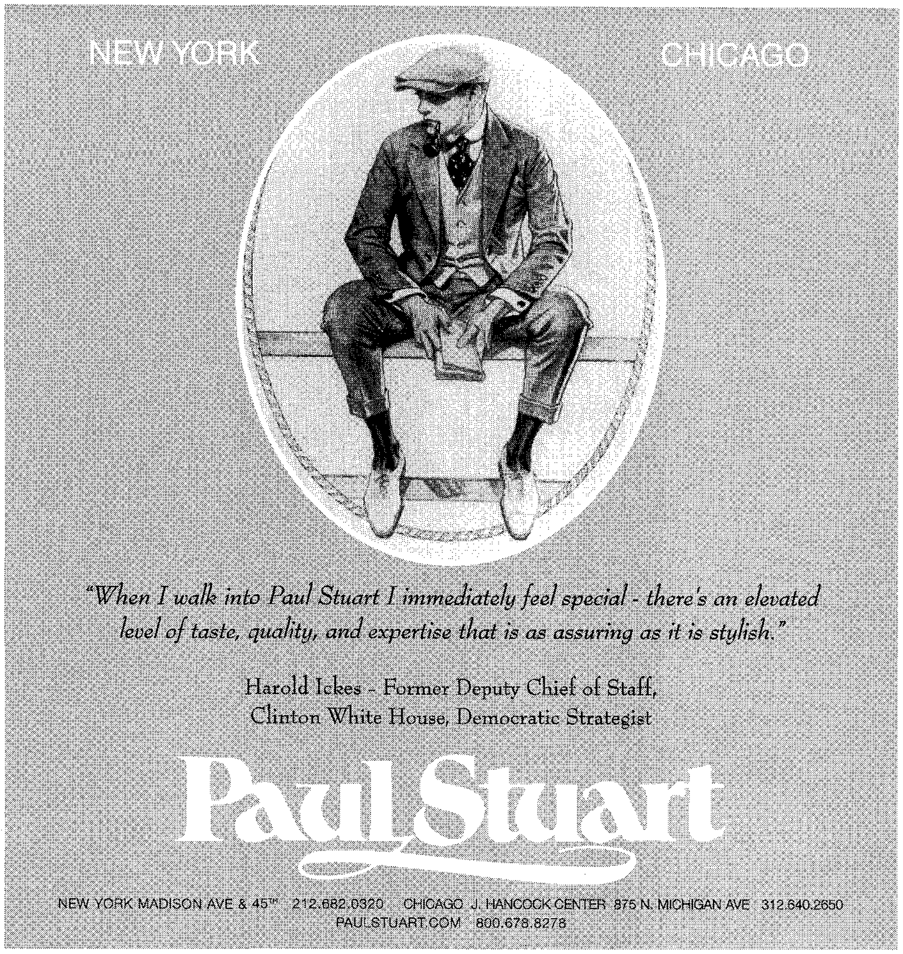
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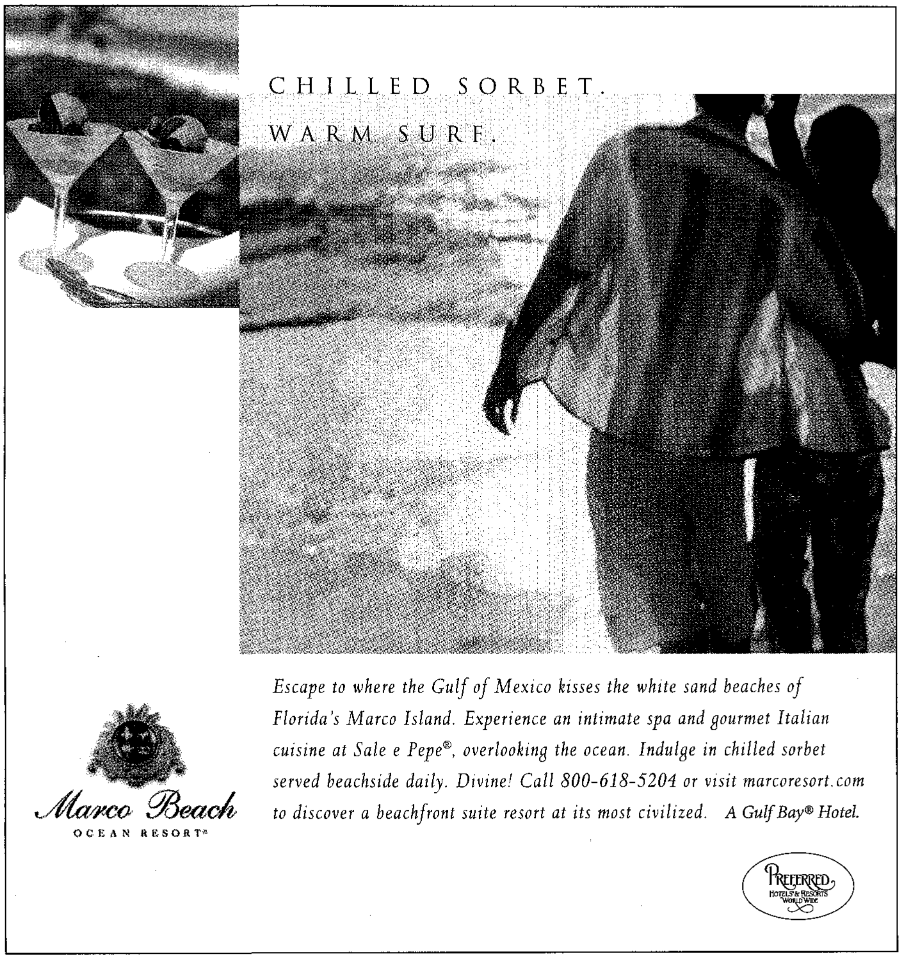
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East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Magic Johnson Theatres, Frederick Douglass Blvd. at 125th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—New York theatrical première. April 13-15 and April 17-19 at 7 and 9 and April 16 at 3 and 5: "15" (2003, Royston Tan; in Hokkien and Mandarin). ♦ "Crossroads: Avant Garde Film in Pittsburgh in the 1970s." April 15 at 8: Short films by Stan Brakhage (1970-71). ♦ April 16 at 6: Short films by Stan Brakhage and James Broughton (1971-76). ♦ April 16 at 8: Short films by Stephanie Beroes, Victor Grauer, James and Leo Vale, and Robert Haller (1966-2004). ♦ April 17 at 6: Short films by Greg Gans and David Lee (1971-76). ♦ April 17 at 8: Short films by Robert Gaylor (1972). ♦ April 18 at 8: Short films by Roger Jacoby (1969-76). ♦ April 19 at 8: Short films by Brady Lewis, Al Mahler, Bruce Posner, and Sharon Ruppert (1972-82). ♦ "Essential Cinema." April 16 at 4: "Nanook of the North" (†). ♦ April 17 at 7: "Man of Aran" (1934, Robert Flaherty; silent).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through April 17: "In the Company of Arnaud Desplechin." April 13 at 7: "My Sex Life . . . Or How I Got Into an Argument" (1996; in French). ♦ April 14 at 7: "Esther Kahn" (2000). ♦ April 15 at 7: "Kings and Queen" (2004; in French, English, and German). ♦ April 16 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Playing 'In the Company of Men' " (2003; in French). ♦ April 17 at 3 and 7: "The Sentinel" (1992; in French). ♦ "Who's Afraid of Mike Nichols?" April 19 at 7: "Catch-22" (1970).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Special event. April 13-19 at 1:10, 4:30, and 8: "Major Dundee" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through April 26: "Paris Series." April 19 at 12:30 and 7: "Daguerreotypes" (1975, Agnès Varda; in French). ♦ April 19 at 4: "The Mother and the Whore" (1973, Jean Eustache; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Première special: "The Tavianis and Antonioni." April 13 at 6:30 and April 16 at 2: "Luisa Sanfelice" (2004, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian). ♦ "112 Years of Cinema." April 13 at 8:30: "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli). ♦ April 16 at 8: "Padre Padrone" (1977, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian). ♦ April 18 at 5:30: "Almanac of Fall" (1984, Béla Tarr; in Hungarian). ♦ April 18 at 7: "Two Daughters" (1961, Satyajit Ray; in Bengali). ♦ The films of Christopher Guest. April 14 at 6: "Best in Show" (2000). ♦ April 14 at 8:30 and April 16 at 6: "The Princess Bride" (1987, Rob Reiner). ♦ April 15 at 6: "Waiting for Guffman" (1996). ♦ April 16 at 8: "This Is Spinal Tap" (1984, Reiner). ♦ April 17 at 2: "The Big Picture" (1989). ♦ April 17 at 5: "A Mighty Wind" (2003). ♦ Special screening. April 14 at 8: "Bandits of Orgosolo" (1960, Vittorio De Seta; in Italian). ♦ "Friday Night at the Movies." April 15 at 5: "Bowling for Columbine" (2002, Michael Moore). ♦ Through April 23: "Hans Christian Andersen for Grown-Ups." April 16 at 2: "The Match Factory Girl" (1990, Aki Kaurismäki; in Finnish). ♦ April 16 at 4: "The Little Match Girl" (1928, Jean Renoir; silent) and "Match Girl" (1966, Andrew Meyer). ♦ "Louis Feuillade: A Sampling of a Master." April 17 at 2: "Les Vampires" (1915; silent).

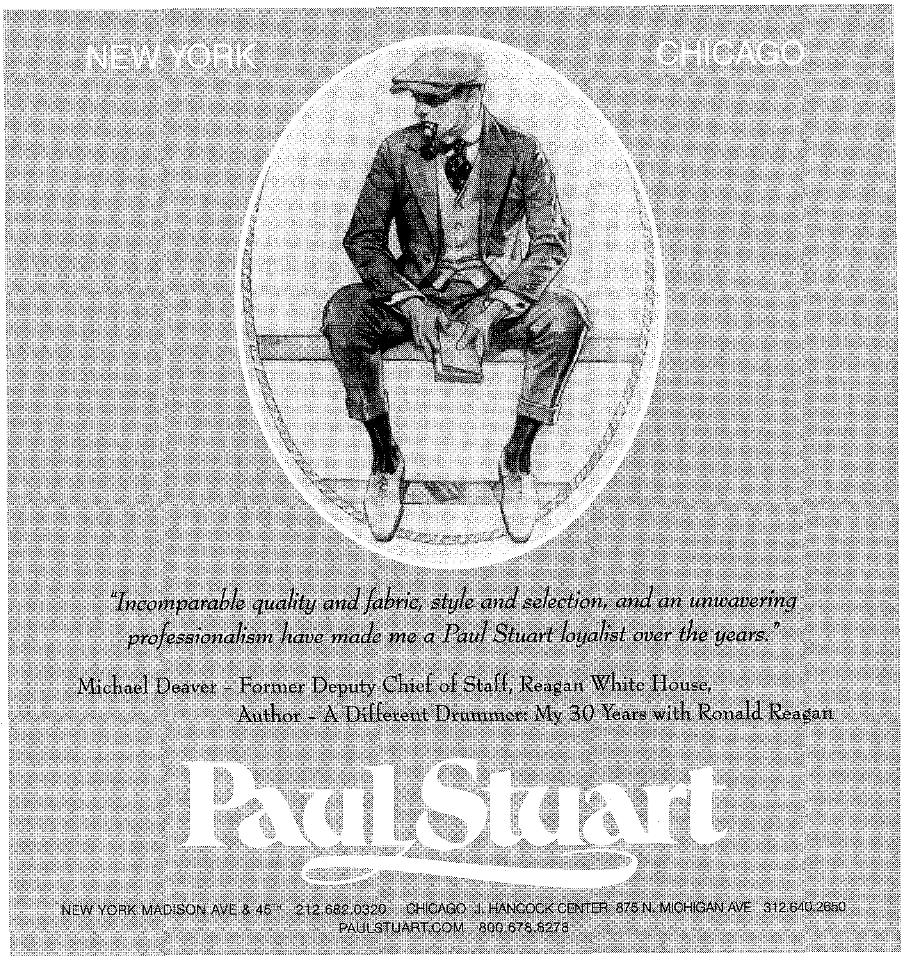
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Havana Film Festival in New York. All films are in Spanish. April 15 at 7:30: "The Holy Girl" (2004, Lucrecia Martel). ♦ April 16 at 6:30: "Cachimba" (2004, Silvio Caiozzi). ♦ April 17 at 6:30: "Portrait of Teresa" (1979, Pastor Vega). ♦ "Candid Cameras: Real Life on Film." April 16 at 4:30: "Real Life" (1979, Albert Brooks). ♦ April 17 at 2: "Nanook of the North" (†). ♦ April 17 at 4: "Chronicle of a Summer" (†).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. April 15-16: "Welcome to the Dollhouse" (1995, Todd Solondz).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Reel Rhythms: Music from the Islamic World." April 17 at 2: "Marcel Khalife Voyageur" (2004, Pierre Dupouey; in Arabic and French). ♦ April 19 at 7: "The Bridge of Bosnian Blues" (2004, Mira Erdevicki; in English and Bosnian). ♦ April 19 at 8:15: "Whose Is This Song?" (2003, Adela Peeva; in Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Turkish).

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL
The festival, which runs through May 1, shows films at several different venues. See www.tribecafilmfestival.org for locations. (212-321-7400)—Opening-night première. April 19 at 7 and 8: "The Interpreter" (2005, Sydney Pollack).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through April 19: "Pulling Strings: Violinists on Film." April 16 at 2: The students of Leopold Auer: Efrem Zimbalist, Misha Elman, Nathan Milstein, and Jascha Heifetz. ♦ April 17 at 2: The French-Belgian School: Jacques Thibaud, Ginette Neveu, Arthur Grumaux, Ivry Gitlis, and Christian Ferras. ♦ April 19 at 6:30: Nathan Milstein and Henryk Szeryng. ♦ April 19 at 8:45: Isaac Stern. ♦ Through April 17: "Amitabh Bachchan: The Biggest Film Star in the World!" April 13 at 1:15 and April 17 at 7:45: "Agneepath" (1990, Mukul Anand; in Hindi). ♦ April 13 at 4:30 and April 16 at 8: "Aankhen" (2002, Vipul Shan; in Hindi). ♦ April 13 at 8 and April 17 at 4:30: "Aks" (2001, Rakesh Mehra; in Hindi). ♦ April 14 at 2:30: "Khakee" (2004, Rajkumar Santoshi; in Hindi and Urdu). ♦ April 14 at 6: "Abhimaan" (1973, Hrishikesh Mukherjee; in Hindi). ♦ April 15 at 1: "Dev" (2004, Govind Nihalani; in Hindi). ♦ April 15 at 4:15: "Black" (2005, Sanjay Leela Bhansali; in Hindi and English). ♦ April 15 at 6:40: "Anand" (1970, Mukherjee; in Hindi). ♦ April 15 at 9:10: "Zanjeer" (1973, Prakash Mehra; in Hindi and Urdu). ♦ April 16 at 4:30: "Amar Akbar Anthony" (1977, Manmohan Desai; in Hindi). ♦ April 19 at 3: "Saudagar" (1973, Sudhendu Roy; in Hindi).



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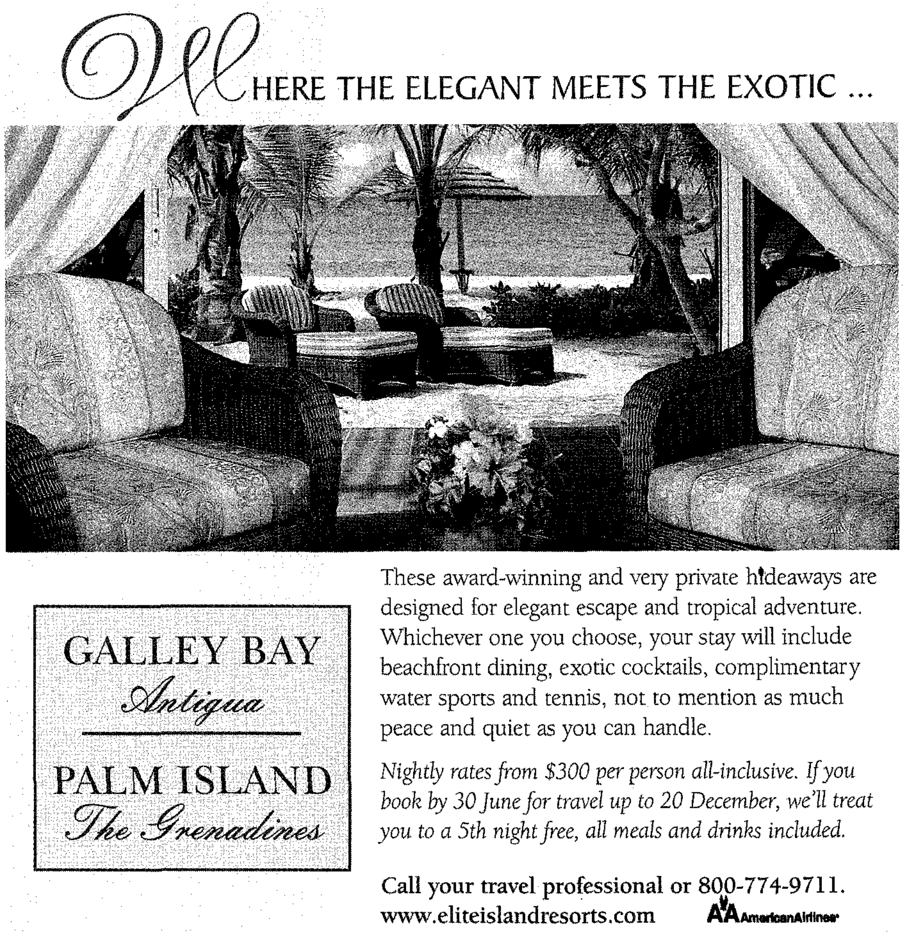

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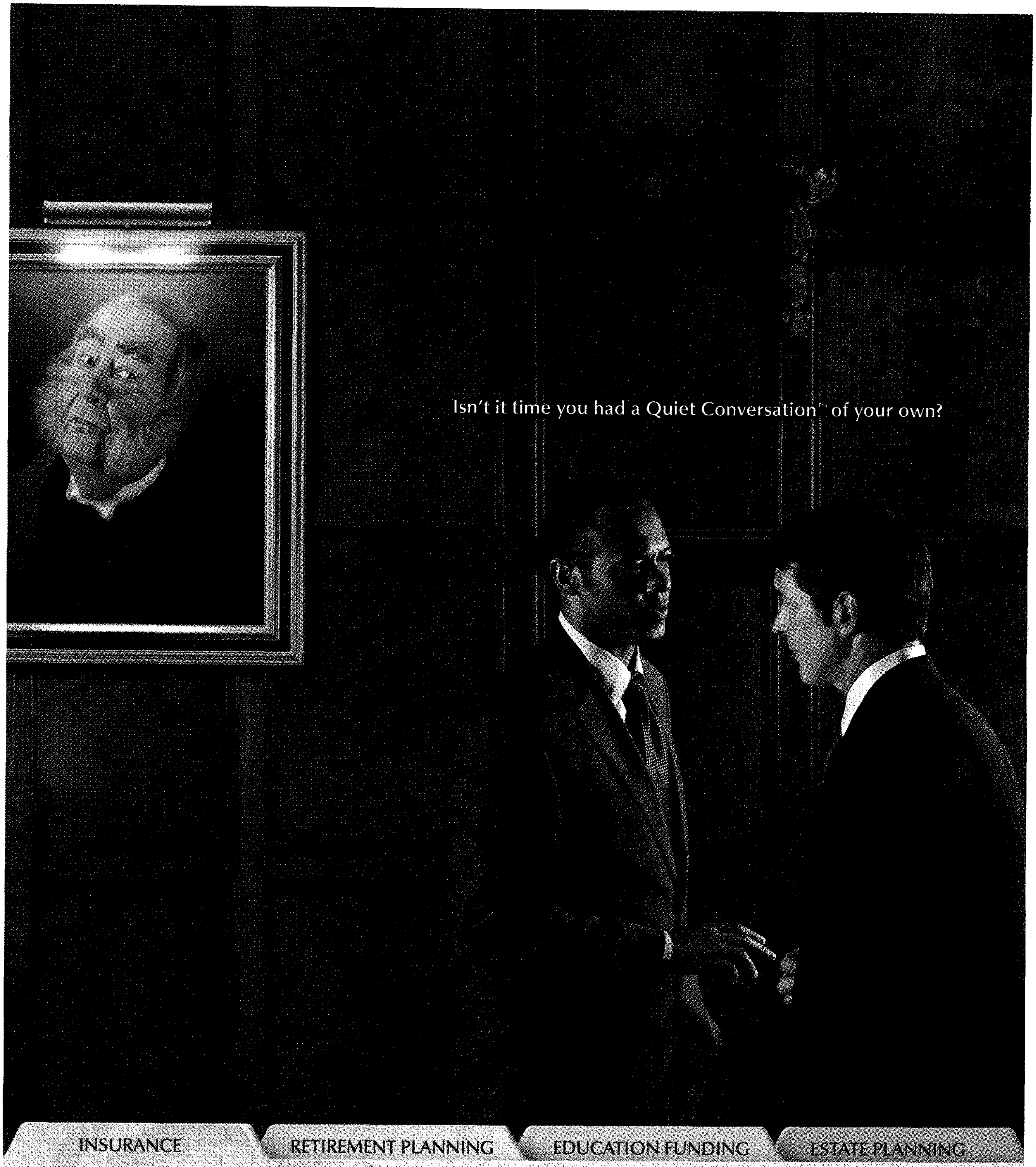
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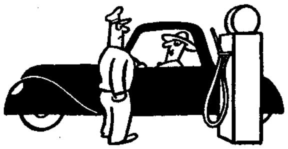
THE NEW YORKER

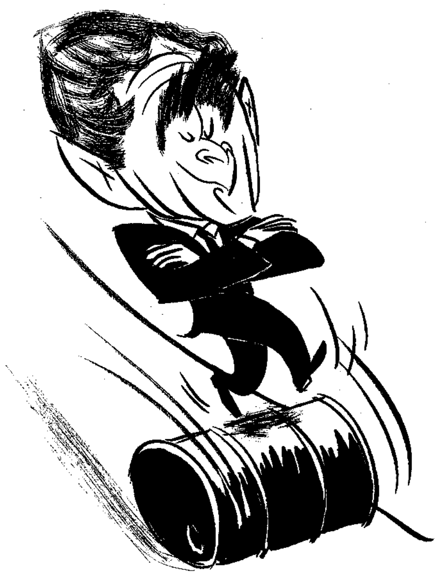
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
WASTED ENERGY



The act that designated the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was signed into law on December 2, 1980, by President Jimmy Carter, just a few weeks before he left office. It already had a long and troubled history. The act had taken nearly a decade to negotiate, and during this period Carter had been vilified in Anchorage and burned in effigy in Fairbanks. Meanwhile, even though the overarching purpose of the act was supposed to be conservation—the Arctic Refuge is only a small part of the more than a hundred million acres it set aside—by the time it worked its way through Congress it was riddled with parochial and environmentally dubious provisions such as subsidies for logging in national forests. The act's treatment of the refuge itself was particularly equivocal. Some eighteen million acres of mountainous and inaccessible terrain were declared off limits to development. But the land that actually needed protection—one and a half million acres of caribou calving grounds along the Beaufort Sea—was left in legislative limbo. A future Congress could study that area's oil and gas potential and then, if it wished, authorize drilling.

The result of this arrangement has been a battle as long and, up until now, at least, as ineffectual as any on Capitol Hill. The acres left up for grabs in 1980 are often referred to as the "1002 area," after the section of the bill that dealt—or, rather, failed to deal—with their fate. In 1987, President Reagan recommended drilling in the 1002, but Congress rejected the idea. In 1995, Congress authorized opening the area, only to be thwarted by President Clinton. Picking up where Reagan had left off, President George W. Bush, in 2001, included a drilling provision in his ill-fated energy bill; after that bill died, Senate Republicans tried, unsuccessfully, to insert a similar provision into the 2004 budget resolution. Last month, this tactic finally worked, and the Senate approved a budget that would open up the 1002 area. The House of Representatives, however, has not passed the same budget, so the fate of the refuge is now tangled up with a great number of other issues, including Medicaid funding, which have nothing to do with it but which will determine whether or not the two houses can agree on a spending plan. Perversely, one of the key votes in favor of drilling for oil in Alaska came from Senator Mel Martinez, Republican of Florida, who backed it in return for a promise from the Bush Administration to extend a moratorium on drilling for oil in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. ("I would understand how some might view it as a problem," Martinez said of this deal.)



Over the past few weeks, Administration officials have been lobbying hard in favor of opening the refuge. In a speech in Columbus, Ohio, President Bush claimed that drilling operations would be limited to an area the size of that city's airport, and would eventually produce enough crude to "reduce our dependence on foreign oil by up to a million barrels of oil a day." In TV appearances and op-ed pieces, Interior Secretary Gale Norton has sounded similar themes, arguing, on the one hand, that drilling will have almost no impact on wildlife—"The overall 'footprint' of the equipment and facilities needed to develop the 1002 area would be restricted to two thousand acres," she wrote last month in the *Times*—and, on the other, that it is an essential part of "a comprehensive energy strategy." At this point, it would be hard to say which part of the Administration's argument—attempting to minimize drilling's environmental impact or to maximize its strategic

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

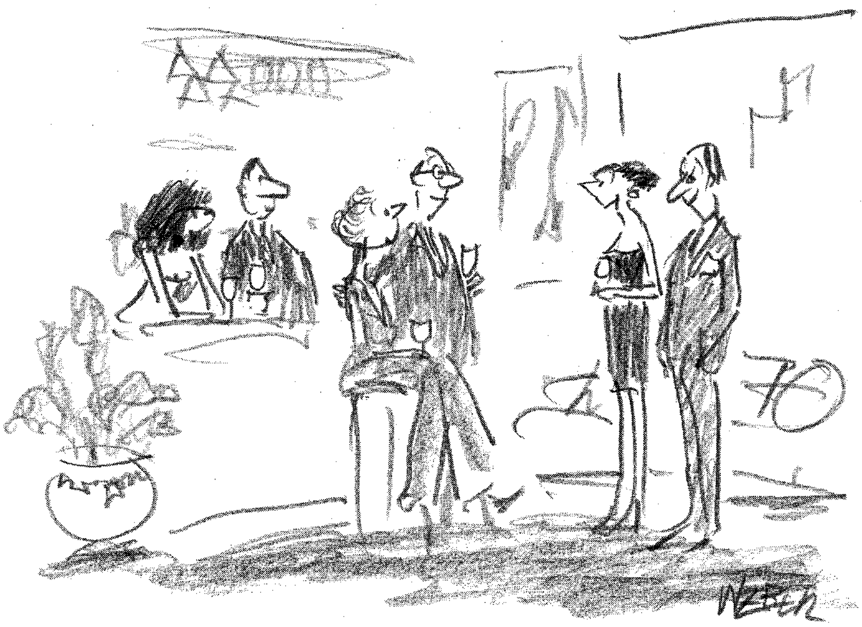
significance—is more misleading. (To get to the two-thousand-acre figure, you have to be willing to consider the "footprint" of, say, thirty miles' worth of pipeline as just the area where the pipeline's supports touch the ground.)

No one really knows how much oil lies under the 1002 area; a standard estimate is that seven and a half billion barrels are "technically recoverable." (Some of the oil may be so expensive to extract that recovery isn't economically feasible.) For most countries, a reserve of this size would represent a significant supply. Such is the United States' thirst for petroleum, however, that seven and a half billion barrels is but a tastevin to a wino. The federal Energy Information Administration recently predicted that, if drilling is approved this year, crude could begin to flow from the Arctic Refuge in a decade, and production would peak, at around eight hundred and seventy-five thousand barrels a day, a dozen years later. The E.I.A. also anticipates that by then demand in the United States will be so high that the country will still have to import sixty-six per cent of its oil, only four per cent less than if the refuge were left untouched.

With or without drilling in the Arctic Refuge, global oil production is expected to start dropping sometime in the next several years, owing to dwindling reserves. A forward-looking energy plan would address this eventuality. Oil consumption in the United States has been steadily rising since Jimmy Carter left office, in 1981. If during that time fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks had been raised by just five miles per gallon, we would now be using one and a half million barrels of oil less each day, and if they had been raised by ten miles per gallon we would be using two and a half million barrels of oil less each day. If fuel-efficiency standards were raised to forty miles per gallon—a level that is eminently achievable with current technology—the United States would save sixty billion barrels of oil over the next fifty years. Simply upgrading the standards for replacement tires so that they match those for tires on new cars would avert the need for seven billion barrels, which is roughly the same amount we could hope to get out of the Arctic Refuge.

So clear are the numbers that just about everyone—outside the White House and Capitol Hill—recognizes what's needed. Recently, a group of military experts sent the President a letter urging him, as a matter of national security, to launch "a major new initiative to curtail U.S. consumption." One signatory, Frank Gaffney, the head of the Center for Security Policy, told the *Wall Street Journal* that reducing oil demand is "no longer a nice thing to do—it's imperative." Preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge won't, of course, do anything to change energy use. But energy policy is no excuse for destroying it.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*



"We sold our two-bedroom in the Village at a great price and bought the Virgin Islands."

DEPT. OF MERGERS
WINNERS

A sense of well-being suffused the city last Wednesday, when temperatures rose to seventy-five degrees, making the still-bare trees in Central Park suddenly look underdressed and drawing pasty office workers onto the avenues for dazed lunchtime strolls. That evening at the Grill Room of the Four Seasons, the mood was as buoyant as in the streets outside, although the guests were the sort who had likely strolled during the day no farther than the stretch of pavement between sidewalk canopy and limousine. The restaurant was hosting a book party for Jack Welch, the retired C.E.O. of G.E., and now the author of "Winning," a business-management handbook that he co-authored with his new wife, Suzy Welch. Although most of the guests were people who had already figured out their own victory strategies without recourse to Welch's bullet points, all were happy to observe Welch's eighth and last rule of leadership, as expressed on page 78: "Leaders celebrate."

"I fucking adore him," Barry Diller said of the honoree as he wove among the throngs. "He's the C.E.O. of my company when I'm in the room with him. There are people of whom it's really true that they only made a few of them, and he is one of those." Many of Welch's guests fell similarly into the category of singularity. Henry Kissinger was there, as were Les Moonves, Dan Rather, Ron Perelman, and Robert Morgenthau. The Welches were paid four million dollars for their book, the authors' profits from which, the dedication page announces, will go to charity. The man from whose pocket that sum ultimately came, Rupert Murdoch, rose to the restaurant's mezzanine to pay homage to the couple. They married in 2004 after one of the business world's more embarrassingly public courtships, which began after Suzy Welch, then the forty-two-year-old Suzy Wetlaufer and the divorced editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, interviewed Welch, then the sixty-six-year-old husband of his second wife, Jane Welch.

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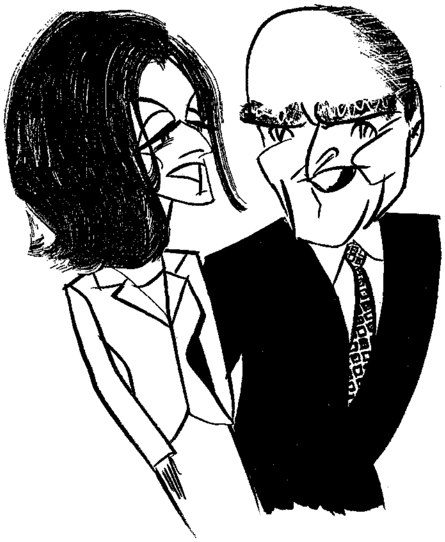
"This book shares many of Jack's secrets—his business secrets," said Murdoch, whose hair, once gray with age, has turned mole-brown, and whose own much younger wife, Wendy Deng, stood smilingly by. "The others were in the New York *Post*."

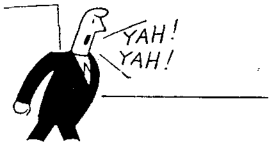


The Welches

Welch, who is pictured on the cover of the book with his wedding band subtly displayed, and whose wife's name is listed below his in smaller but no less gilded type, was asked if the book contained any principles that might apply to managing intimate relationships. "I think the importance of candor, and transparency, and celebration," he said, thoughtfully. (Presumably relevant as well is the importance of discretion when letting an employee go, detailed on pages 129-130: the terms of Welch's divorce from Jane were reached privately, before the necessity of a trial.) Suzy Welch, who was wearing an off-white Escada suit, was less persuaded of the relevance of Welch's business-world insights to the sphere of love and marriage. "I don't perceive him to be a very powerful person, because he is my husband, he is my children's stepfather," she said. The three rings on her wedding finger—two diamond-encrusted wedding bands sandwiching an engagement ring bearing a diamond as big as a Chiclet—did speak, however, of a certain kind of spousal potency. "Read it in *People* magazine," she said, blushing, when asked how many carats she was wearing. "I can't bring myself to say."

—*Rebecca Mead*

DEPT. OF NOISEMAKING
THE ANGRY INVESTOR



Last week marked the end of an era at Madison Square Garden, when Spike Lee, the Knicks' iconic superfan, hugged his nemesis Reggie Miller, who is retiring from the Indiana Pacers, at center court. After more than a decade of combat, no more heckling, no more yapping. The truce doesn't exactly leave a void in the local-loudmouths department, but recent events, at the Garden and elsewhere, have occasioned a realignment of the yappers' pecking order, and no one seems quite as energized these days as Daniel Loeb, the forty-something multimillionaire who has positioned himself as a kind of investor's H. L. Mencken, dedicated to puncturing the social habits and pretensions of powerful executives from his courtside perch at Third Point L.L.C., a hedge fund on Madison Avenue.

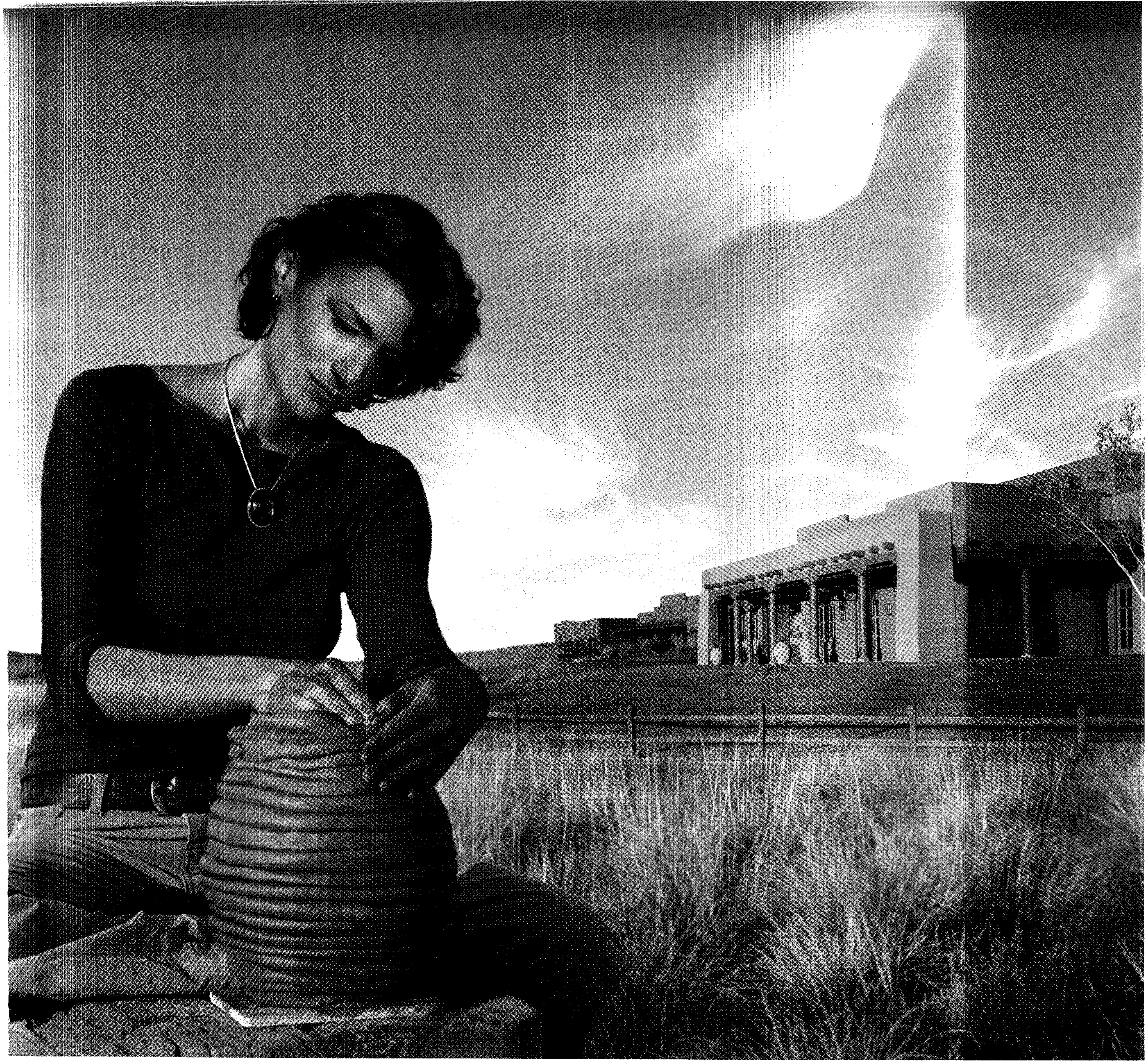
Loeb's favored device is the scolding letter, formally addressed, publicly released, and ruthlessly frank in its assessments of managerial competence. He writes the boards and C.E.O.s of companies that his fund has invested in, complaining, in effect, that they are not making him and his clients enough money. And, like a certain kind of basketball fan unhappy with an overpaid, underperforming point guard, he recommends, in hyperbolic language ("to ensure you a dazzling place in the firmament of bad management"), that they be replaced—benched. To some degree, his manner is that of the traditional Wall Street crank: swagger and self-interest disguised as moralistic bombast. What Loeb brings, in terms of value-added, is tacked-on social commentary: the sly references to Brooks Brothers ("out-dated men's fashions catering to the country club set") or to "the Appalachian coal men coming with aspirations to wear crocodile skin cowboy boots, silver spurs and ten-gallon hats." His style—call it hedge-fund populism—has earned him a wide readership that extends far beyond the shareholders and directors who have an interest in the matter at hand. Each new abusive dispatch makes the rounds among financial professionals, as Loeb's more astute fans and detractors take note of his recurring motifs: chauffeurs, hobnobbing, the phrase "inexplicable insouciance."

One day in February, for example, Loeb fired off scalding letters to two C.E.O.s, accusing each, ostensibly, of producing insufficient profits and paltry returns. What really had him bothered, in the case of Salton, Inc., wasn't so much the dwindling stock price as the suggestion of entitlement and sloth. It especially galled him to see the Salton chief, Leonhard Dreimann, at the U.S. Open tennis final. "My bewilderment quickly turned to anger," Loeb wrote, "when I saw the crowd seeking autographs from the Olsen twins just below the private box that seemed to be occupied by Mr. Dreimann and others who were enjoying the match and summer sun while hobnobbing, snacking on shrimp cocktails, and sipping chilled Gewürztraminer."

Then there was the letter to Irik Sevin, the chief of Star Gas Partners (and "one of the most dangerous and incompetent executives in America"): "Do what you do best: retreat to your waterfront mansion in the Hamptons where you can play tennis and hobnob with your fellow socialites." (Loeb himself has a fifteen-million-dollar waterfront house in East Hampton.) Hobnobbing was not Sevin's only crime: Loeb had learned of an Irik Sevin scholarship at Cornell. "One can only pity the poor student who suffers the indignity of attaching your name to his academic record," he wrote. He got even more personal. "How is it possible that you selected your elderly 78-year old mom to serve on the Company's Board of Directors and as a full-time employee?" Loeb wondered. "Under what theory of corporate governance does one's mom sit on a Company board?" A heckler's cardinal rule: When in doubt, drop the mom bomb.

Sometimes, yapping can even seem to be very effective. A few weeks ago, Irik Sevin quietly resigned. So did his mother, Audrey. (Dreimann remains at Salton. Neither man cared to respond to Loeb's attacks.)

And so it was on the wave of that recent success that Loeb was moved, the other day, to expand his critical reach across the Atlantic. In an e-mail exchange with a London-based money manager named Alan Lewis, who was exploring the idea of working for Third Point, Loeb grew impatient with the polite pace of their discus-



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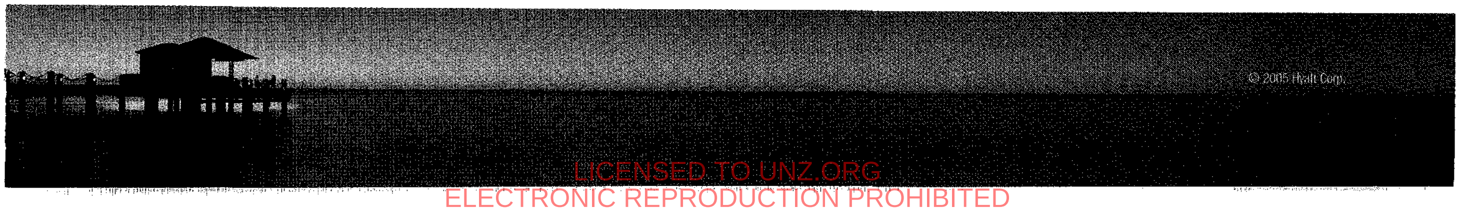
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sions. "We find most Brits are a bit set in their ways and prefer to knock back a pint at the pub and go shooting on weekends rather than work hard," he wrote Lewis.

"Daniel, I guess your reputation is proven correct," Lewis replied, noting that, as a matter of fact, he is half American and half French. "Things are done differently here, yes place in society still matters, where one went to school, etc."

"Your 'inexplicable insouciance' and disrespect is fascinating; it must be a French/English aristocratic thing," Loeb shot back, adding a classic hedge-fund diss: "There must be an insurance company or mutual fund out there for you."

The discussion wound down with a volley of one-word grenades: "hubris" from Lewis, "laziness" from Loeb. Finally, satisfied that the correspondence merited inclusion in the canon, Loeb did what he does best: he went public. "It is hard to find good help these days," he wrote to an undisclosed list of colleagues and friends, attaching the entire exchange. "Read from the bottom."

—Ben McGrath

LEGACIES
THE NUT LADY RETURNS

Filbert by filbert, the Nut Museum is once more taking shape. For thirty years, Elizabeth Tashjian ran the museum out of her house, a Gothic Revival mansion in Old Lyme, Connecticut. Millions of Americans knew her as "the Nut Lady" from her periodic guest appearances on the "Tonight Show," where she would expound on the metaphysics of the nut. In both roles, she wore silk robes from her Armenian grandmother's trousseau, to underscore the point that many of the "popular" nuts originated near Armenia, in Asia Minor. (Not everyone made the connection.) At home, after pocketing the museum admission fee—three dollars and a nut—Tashjian would show visitors paintings she'd done of walnuts menaced by bullying nutcrackers and her "Mask of the Unknown Nut" sculpture. In an early visit to the "Tonight Show," in 1981, she carried a thirty-five-pound coco-de-mer from the Seychelles that resembled a woman's buttocks. The existence of such a sexually provocative nut, she informed an enchanted Johnny Carson, utterly refuted Darwin.

Away from the cameras, however, Tashjian, who never married, lived an increasingly reclusive life with her cats, Dinky and Pinky. By 2002, she was nearly indigent and quite frail. She fell into a coma, and awoke several weeks later in a hospital to find that the probate court had put her house on the market (it was later sold to pay her debts). Her nuts and paintings and pricky-burr sculptures, meanwhile, had been rescued by a sympathetic Connecticut College professor named Christopher Steiner, who purchased them from the town for the sum of zero dollars, but they were now the college's property. Worst of all, she herself had been declared incapable and was a ward of the State of Connecticut.

Tashjian, who is now ninety-two, told a recent visitor to her room at the Gladeview nursing home, in Old Saybrook, that although she never liked being called the Nut Lady, it was vastly preferable to being a state-certified nut. A small, stooped woman, she has a habit of darting a shoulder forward to underline a point. "I'm in a predicament!" she said. Still, she has allies. Professor Steiner, a soft-spoken art historian who has featured Tashjian's work in his museum-studies classes, curated a show of her paintings last year. In March, he arranged for her to perform for a local Cub Scout troop with a few nuts he'd brought from the college's storage locker. Tashjian turned the scouts to making hazel-husk hats. She also told them about the little bearded dwarf that dwells within every peanut embryo. "There were some hardened kids there who wore black T-shirts and looked really irritated," Steiner said. "But after twenty minutes they were totally into it."

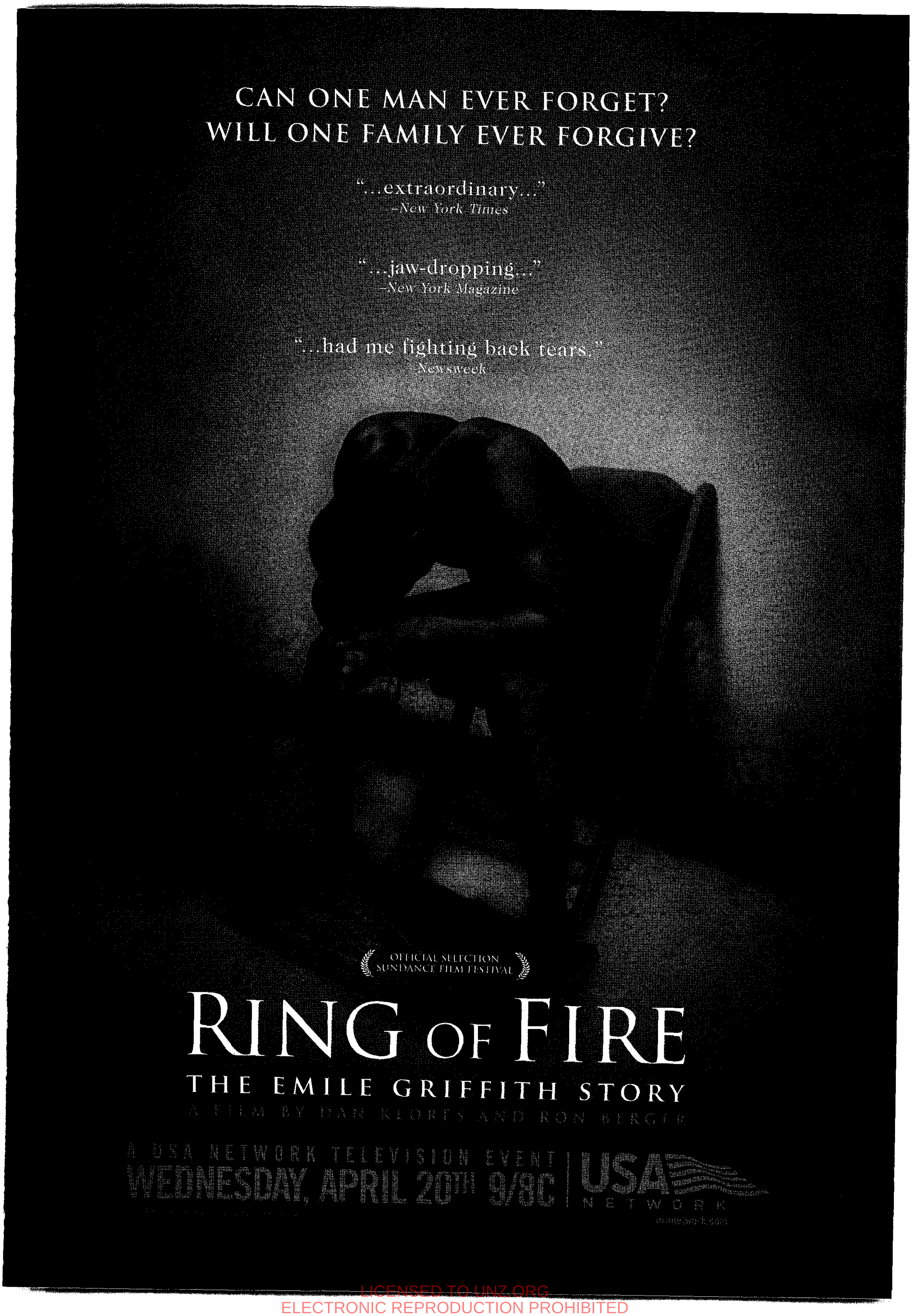
Tashjian had just learned that Steiner was going to bring ten of her paintings to hang in her room at the nursing home. Buoyed, she was planning a new painting about Eden: "I'm saying Eve gave Adam a nut, and not an apple. Making a joke about sex and origin. Down with the apple and up with the nut!" She laughed. "It's a fresh idea, a newie. Gauguin was attracted to the nut, and he carved on nuts. But I use the form directly. Take this black walnut," she continued, holding one forward. "The fragrance of its shell would be a wonderful cologne for a man. It's very pungent, like Old Spice. So there's another new idea."

Steiner is working on a book about unusual museums, titled "Performing the Nut Museum." He sometimes has difficulty discussing it with Tashjian, because, for one thing, it's not solely about her, and, for another, she would prefer to be writing it herself. Don Bernier, the director of a documentary called "In a Nutshell: A Portrait of Elizabeth Tashjian," which had its New York première last week, capitulated on a similar issue: he had planned to make a film about several roadside museums, but Tashjian insisted that he narrow his focus. Genius demands its due. Years ago, at a Christmas Eve lunch at the home of Katharine Hepburn, who was Tashjian's neighbor, Tashjian began to sing her composition "Nuts Are Beautiful." Before too long, "away flew Kate into the kitchen," she recalled. "It irked her that I was a polished artist—she didn't want the attention not on her."

Tashjian is distressed that Bernier's film reveals the untidy state her house was found in while she was in the hospital. "Liz Taylor never showed you the interior of her house," she said. "Whereas showing the museum proper leaves a happy taste, showing those dirty dishes in disarray belittles me, as though I am"—her voice faltered—"insane. But it happened that my kitchen drainage was stopped up, and I was ill. I was dillydallying, let's say, gaining my poise to call a serviceman."

In February, after a doctor examined her, the probate court declared Tashjian capable of managing her affairs. Next, if she can find an obliging attorney, she hopes to reclaim her home. The woman who bought it hired Martha Stewart's plasterers to spruce up the place, renamed it Garden Roads, then resold it. "She cut down all my nut trees," Tashjian said. "Carpathian walnut, black walnut, chestnut, filbert—all gone. All." Tashjian also wants to sue the State of Connecticut. One of her planned causes of action is that while she was comatose the state's conservator took nearly six thousand dollars from her bank account to buy her a casket and a funeral policy. "They want to bury me in *their* plot," she said, "but I'm not allowing that." Her shoulder jumped. "I'm increasing my identity. I'm complicating the plot. I'm going just the other way. The Nut Museum marches on!"

—Tad Friend



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THE FINANCIAL PAGE

IN YUAN WE TRUST

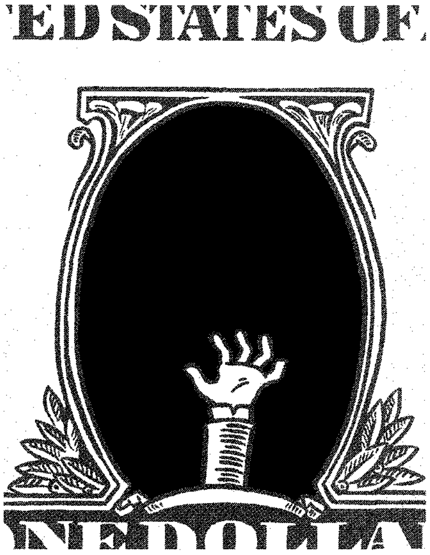
In the 2004 Hollywood comedy "EuroTrip," which chronicles the adventures of a group of American teenagers on a debased modern version of the Grand Tour, our heroes end up trapped in Bratislava with a mere $1.83 in their pockets. Things look bleak, until they discover just what a dollar and change will buy: a luxury suite, massages, three-course meals with champagne, and assiduously servile service. Feeling flush, they toss their waiter a five-cent tip. He turns to his boss and says, "A nickel! You see this? I quit! I open my own hotel."

If only. Nowadays, when you're abroad, you're lucky if $1.83 buys you a cup of coffee. In the past three years, the value of the dollar has fallen by more than fifty per cent against the euro and twenty-five per cent against the yen, and, a recent rally notwithstanding, most analysts say that the dollar is only going to get weaker in the months to come. Europeans now routinely fly across the Atlantic to go shopping, and they have also started to nose around in the American real-estate market. You know the dollar's in trouble when our puffed-up real estate starts looking cheap.

The dollar has fallen for a simple reason: Americans spend a lot more than they save. American consumers, of course, are known for living on credit, and they buy hundreds of billions of dollars' worth a year of foreign goods—cars, TVs, T-shirts, khakis. In addition, since 2001 the American government has been running giant budget deficits, thanks to the magical combination of tax cuts and spending increases. We don't have enough money at home to pay for all this spending, so we borrow from foreigners to make up the difference. Because we keep piling on this foreign debt—more than three trillion dollars so far—and have no clear strategy for paying it back, people are made anxious about the United States economy; this anxiety encourages them to sell dollars, and that drives down the value of our currency.

The dollar's decline, grim as it seems, has so far had little impact on the everyday lives of most Americans. To be sure, there are new burdens: the price of truffles is up sharply, and the cost of a trip to Paris now rivals that of a semester in college. But inflation and interest rates are still low, the stock market is above where it was three years ago, and Americans have had no trouble slaking their appetite for foreign-made goods. Doomsayers have been predicting for a while that the profligacy will lead to serious trouble. So why hasn't it?

One answer is that Asia won't let it. Last year, Asian countries invested almost four hundred billion dollars in the United States, mostly in government bonds. China is effectively taking most of its excess national savings and lending it to the United States. The Japanese, who despite their creaking economy remain flush with savings, bought a quarter trillion dollars of American debt last year, even though the interest is lousy and the assets themselves are losing value. More than any other nation in history, the United States depends, economically, on the kindness of strangers. Right now, Asian investors appear very kind.



Markets are hardly known for their tenderness. Usually, you can assume that everyone in a market is trying to make as much money as possible, with as little risk, but the currency market isn't like most others. In the market for the dollar, many of the players have other things on their mind. China needs to go on selling Americans hundreds of billions in exports in order to keep its economy humming. A weaker dollar makes that harder. Asian central banks also already own trillions of dollars in American assets. As the dollar falls, so does the value of those assets. There are plenty of other traders in the currency markets—who have the luxury of being single-minded regarding profit—but the Asian banks are powerful enough to be, in effect, the lenders of last resort. As long as it's in their self-interest to keep America afloat, the dollar will not crash.

Of course, the Chinese and the Japanese could decide that the costs of the falling dollar are too great, and suddenly stop (or, at least, cut back sharply) their lending to the United States. This would lead to a so-called "hard landing" for the U.S. economy: high inflation, punitive interest rates, collapsing stock prices and housing prices. It would also lead to bedlam for China and Japan. Their best customers would effectively be unable to afford their wares. To paraphrase John Paul Getty: If you owe the bank a hundred dollars, you've got a problem. If you owe the bank three trillion dollars, the bank's got a problem.

There's a good chance, then, that the landing will be soft—we lose the truffles but keep our homes—as long as everyone involved in keeping the dollar aloft continues to play the same game. No one, in Asia or anywhere else, wants to be the last guy out. What the Chinese and the Japanese do depends in large part on what they think everyone else is going to do. If the Chinese get the idea that Japan's commitment to the dollar is wavering, or if they decide that the United States has no interest in altering its deadbeat ways, then they may try to make a run for it. Then again, that threat could act as a prod to keep the Americans in line. The currency market is a great example of what George Soros calls "reflexivity": people's predictions about what will happen to the dollar end up having a major impact on what actually does happen to the dollar. Our lenders are trying to strike a delicate balance: they'd like the dollar's predicament to seem dire enough to make us change, but not so dire as to spark panic. So be afraid. Just don't be very afraid.

—*James Surowiecki*

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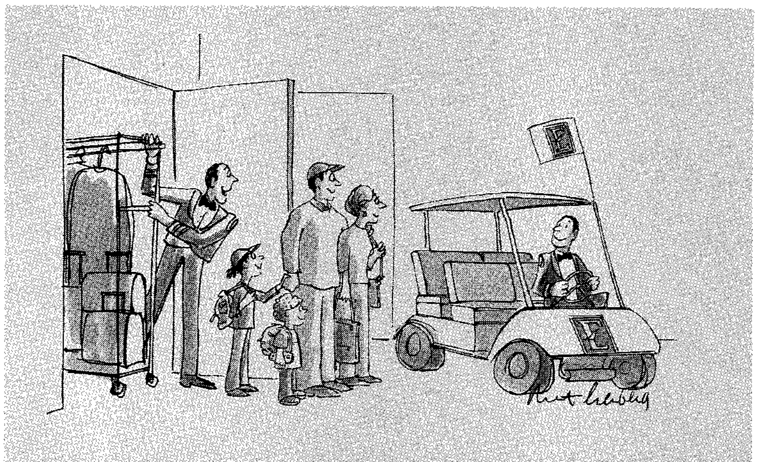

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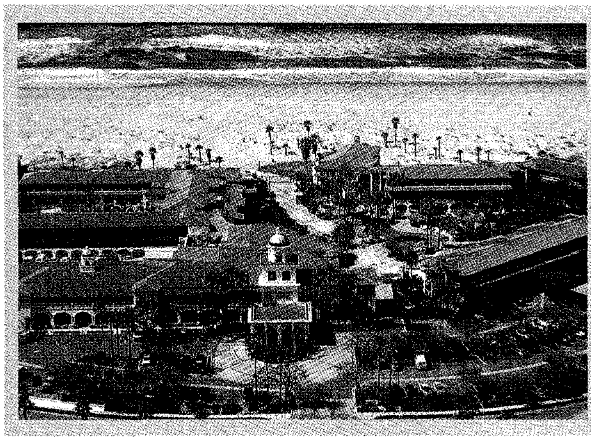
> "Find out what local kids recommend by going online to Kids-Eye™ View at embassysuites.com."

When you get to your suite you find it's really two separate rooms—with a door you can close between them. So even though kids under 18 stay free in the same suite with mom and dad, there's a separate place to watch TV if parents need some extra sleep. The couch makes young guests feel right at home, so does the dining table—big enough to hold two large pizzas. There's a mini fridge for saving leftovers, and a microwave for reheating them or for making a fresh batch of popcorn.

Not that kids have to worry about stuff to eat here. There's an amazing complimentary breakfast. You name it, they have it—cereals, juices, fresh fruit, pancakes, waffles, bacon, sausage, hash browns, muffins, bagels, pastries. And that's just the choices you can help yourself to while the chef makes the kind of omelet you want. Then, at the end of the day, when a little pick-me-up is in order, there's a Manager's Reception, which means snacks and beverages—a Shirley Temple if it suits the mood. Plus there's room service—an excellent idea when everyone would rather eat burgers in their bathrobes than go out to a restaurant.

But when you do want to go out for, say, the best ice cream in town or to other places of interest in the area, you can find out what local kids recommend by going online to Kids-Eye™ View at embassysuites.com. Under "Things to Do," find critical info like home-game baseball schedules and directions to nearby parks.

Not that you have to go anywhere else. For a lot of kids, the best part of an Embassy Suites vacation is being able to have fun right where they are.



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[Explore] *Tumi*

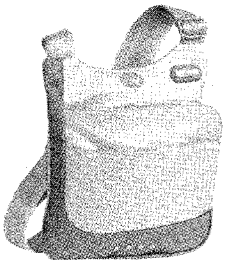
GOING WITH THE FLOW

TUMI Introduces its New Collection

What's in the bag you carry? If the answer includes an iPod, wireless phone, PDA, reading material, grooming items, gym gear, a laptop computer, and other daily carry-alongs, you don't travel light. But what you tote them in can be.

Tumi, known for luggage that combines performance, organization, and innovative design, recently launched its Flow collection of urban lifestyle bags. All are made from lightweight, water-resistant nylon and feature handy pockets, multiple compartments, and exterior cord ports that ear buds can snake through.

"Flow was designed as a group of soft day bags, backpacks, sports bags, totes, and messenger bags with the modern tech-savvy individual in mind," explains Tumi vice president of product management Alan Krantzler. The collection features ten styles with clean, asymmetrical lines. All have an interior lining in a contrasting color. Each item also contains Tumi's exclusive Tracer product identification system, which may facilitate the return of a lost or stolen bag to its owner.



Toting a Best-Seller Under Your Arm

The fashion-forward Flap bag has been the line's best-seller. Designed to be worn across the body, the slim (12" x 12" x 2.5") bag features an easy access zippered pocket in front and an open rear pocket.

Under an asymmetrical front flap that shuts with a magnetic closure, there's an organizational panel with small compartments and slots for a key ring, pens, and business cards. A zippered mesh pocket inside the bag further helps organize and secure valuables. A bag from Tumi Flow is in tune with your lifestyle.

To readers and students of psychology, the name of this collection evokes Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's landmark book, "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience." It contends that people who experience a state of "flow"—*i.e.*, who participate in an activity that completely absorbs their attention—are inevitably happier. Those who carry a Tumi Flow bag might agree.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TUMI CALL 800.322.TUMI OR VISIT TUMI.COM

TUMI Store Locations

Aspen
427 East Hyman Avenue
970.925.7676

Atlanta
Phipps Plaza
404.816.1844

Boston Area
51 Central Street
Wellesley
781.237.7227

Charlotte
South Park Mall
704.714.8864

Chicago
Water Tower Place
312.274.0824

Dallas
North Park Center
214.692.8864

Denver
Cherry Creek Mall
303.388.0900

Detroit Area
Somerset Collection
Troy
248.649.2368

Las Vegas
Desert Passage
at The Aladdin
702.313.2050

Fashion Show Mall
702.413.0897

Los Angeles Area
Beverly Center
310.360.0500

Century City
310.203.9158

Santa Monica Place
310.899.9446

Sherman Oaks
Fashion Square
818.817.0670

South Coast Plaza
714.429.0997

New York Area
102 Prince Street
646.613.9101
520 Madison Avenue
212.813.0545

Rockefeller Center
212.245.7460

The Shops at
Columbus Circle
212.823.9390

Grand Central Terminal
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The Mall at Short Hills
973.376.8800

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The Gardens of the
Palm Beaches
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San Diego
University Towne Center
858.453.1079

San Francisco
100 Grant Avenue
415.402.0820

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TUMI is also sold at fine department and specialty stores in more than forty countries.

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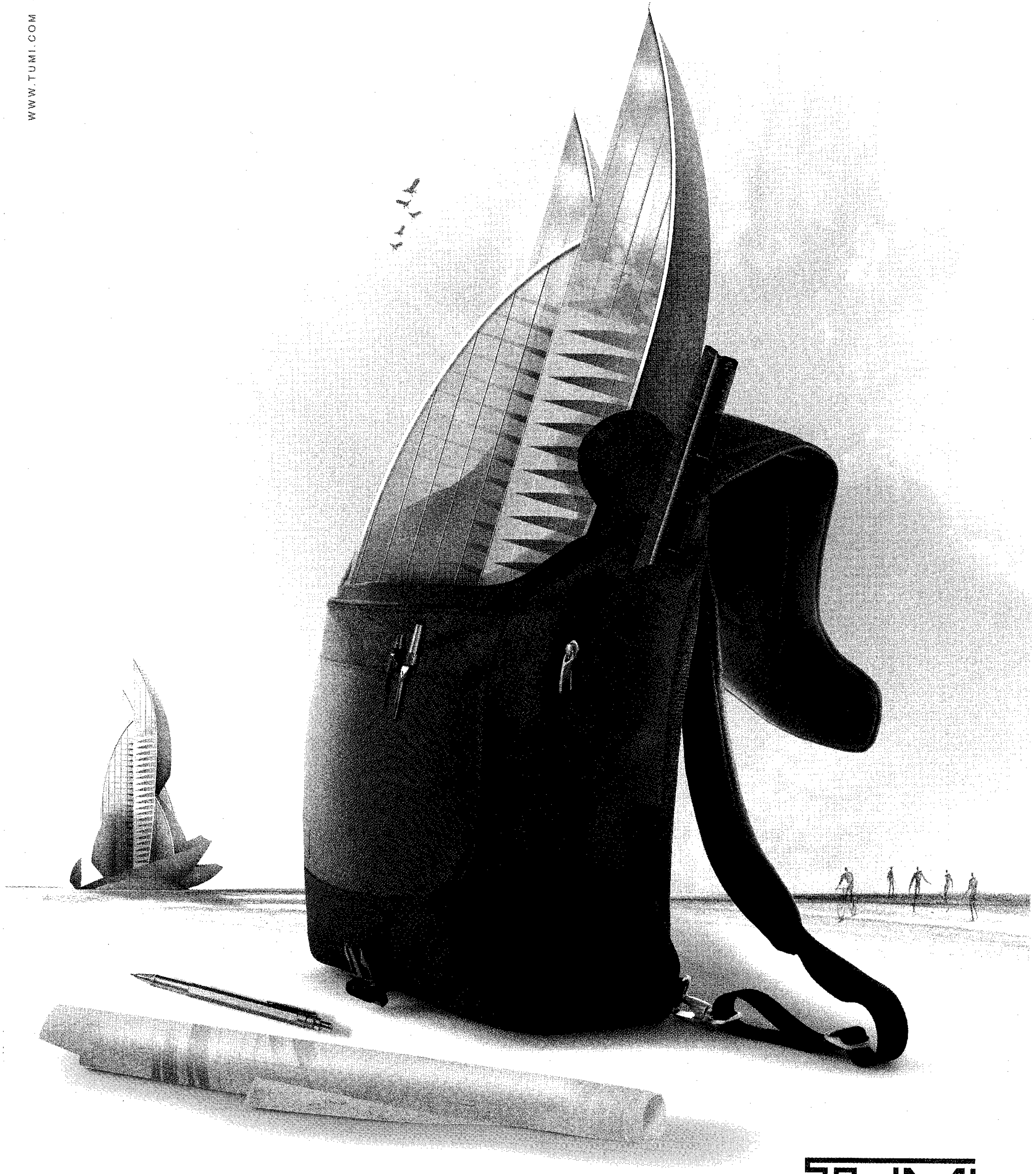

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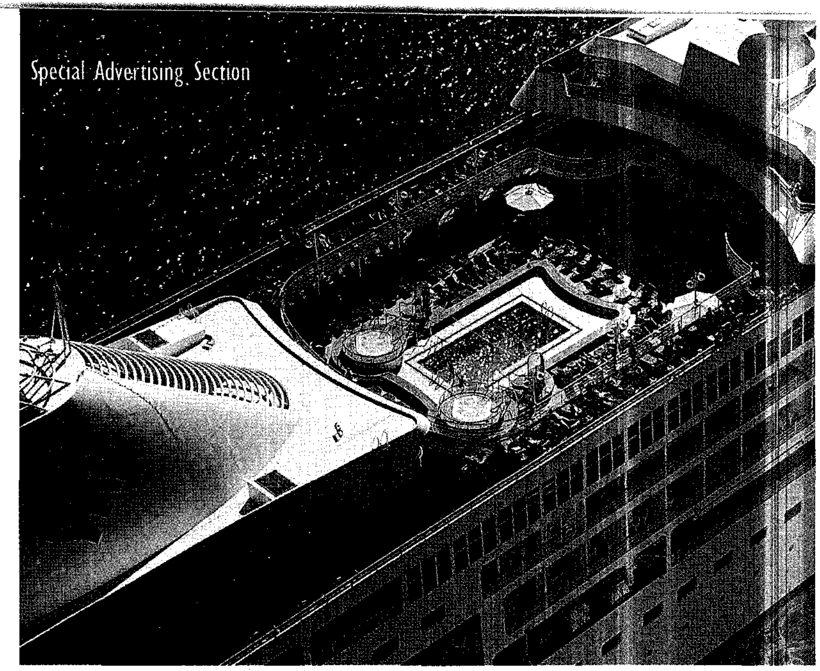
[Explore] *Silversea Cruises*



COURTESY OF SILVERSEA CRUISES

LA DOLCE GETAWAY

In the romance of travel it's rare to find a getting-there that lives up to the promise of getting away. But "Autumn in the Maritimes," a Silversea cruise departing from New York October 10th, does just that. Step onboard and the indulgence begins, even as Silver Whisper® embarks on an eleven-day journey to the rugged beauty of Bar Harbor and Nova Scotia, the glacier-sculpted drama of Newfoundland, the historic narrow streets of Boston, graceful Québec City, and the last stop, Montréal.

Silver Whisper, smaller than most other cruise ships, was launched in 2001 as a sanctuary-at-sea for less than four hundred international guests, offering all suites with marble baths, request-stocked refrigerators, fresh flowers and fruit, and twenty-four-hour room service. There are no gratuities anywhere onboard, and wines and liquors are complimentary. The champagne is waiting in your suite, as is the vantage on sea and stars from your private veranda.

Based in Rome, with Italian ship management and crews, Silversea aims unabashedly for the good life at its best—a celebration of "la dolce vita" from the Acqua di Parma bath amenities to the Loro Piana fashion boutique. An inspired cuisine is created through Silversea's partnership with Relais & Châteaux chefs. You can taste it at The Restaurant, in an Italian feast of sage-flecked gnocchi, grilled *branzino*, and lamb with wild mushrooms. Or you can savor it in the memorable intimacy of Le Champagne, a twenty-four-seat showcase for international cuisine thoughtfully paired with the Head Sommelier's personal recommendations.

LAND ESCAPES

Choose from optional shore excursions that include golf courses, *bike routes, and historic sites.*

Acadia National Park. While in Bar Harbor, see the rocky bays, woodlands, and mountains from a nineteenth-century horse-drawn carriage, traveling paths laid out by the Rockefellers.

Gros Morne National Park. The sea meets windswept cliffs in this seven-hundred square-mile World Heritage Site explored from Corner Brook Newfoundland; the helicopter view is unforgettable.

Cape Breton Island. From Sydney, drive along the rugged shores of Bras d'Or Lake that take you to the historic heart of the Nova Scotia Highlands.

Another retreat, perhaps just as delicious for city-weary psyches, is the Mandara Spa. Here, muscles can melt to the touch of a hot-rock massage; skin can bask in an Elemis coconut rub.

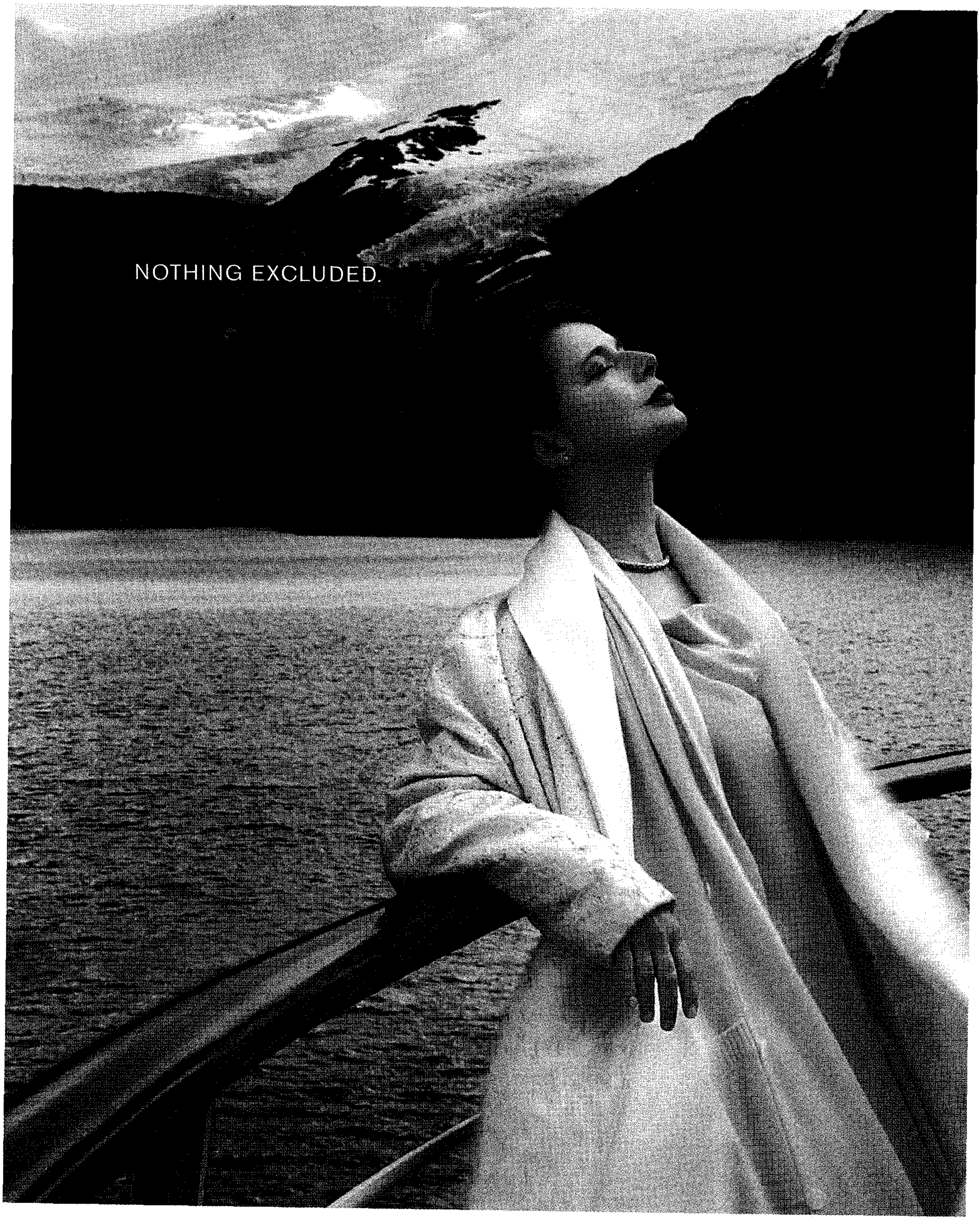
But the pleasure begins months ahead, when you can book spa appointments and shore excursions online. The itinerary itself prompts a mental escape—lighthouses set against foam-laced rocks, mountainsides red and gold with fall leaves, centuries-old harbor retreats—and promises an unforgettable adventure on the high seas.

TO BOOK A RESERVATION ABOARD SILVERSEA CRUISES, CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL, CALL 877-289-1594 OR VISIT SILVERSEA.COM

UPCOMING ENRICHMENT VOYAGE

Autumn in the Maritimes marks one of Silversea's series of Enrichment Voyages. From the Culinary Arts to the Spirit of Exploration, these voyages set the imagination soaring.

Book passage on the September 19–30 **Montréal to New York voyage** aboard Silver Whisper and share the experience with some of the most gifted contemporary magazine illustrators of our time. To be held in the ship's 300-capacity theatre, a question-and-answer exchange with artists Bruce McCall and Anita Kunz will give guests a chance to hear all about the life of an illustration—from the drafting table to the newsstand.



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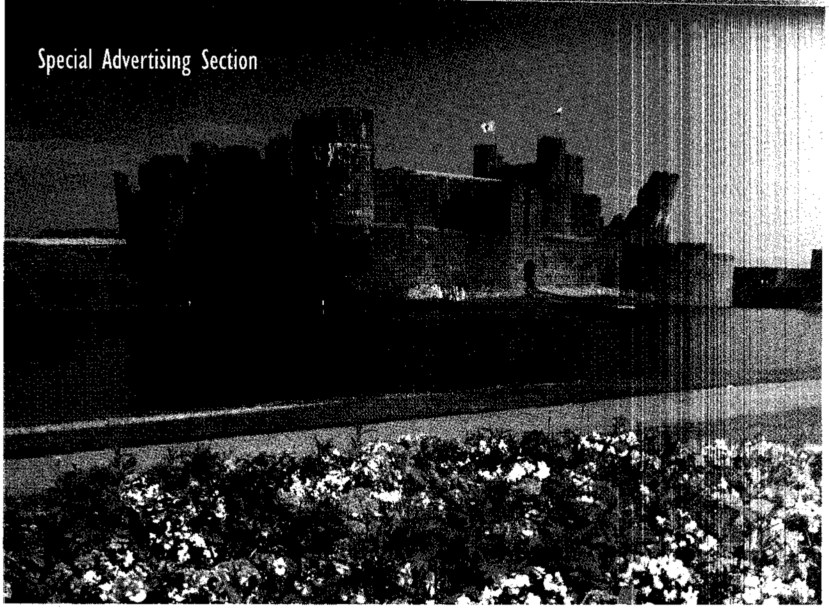


CAERPHILLY CASTLE: WILLIAM HANNING/CORBIS

A NEW SEASON ON THE ISLES

To the four seasons, Britain adds a fifth—one dedicated to festivals, both culinary and cultural. From the centuries-old distilleries of Scotland's Whisky Trail to the brew pubs of Wordsworth's Lake District, from picturesque Welsh dairies to London's culinary temptations—Britain is an exuberant répast. And likewise, its cultural riches will be widely on display this spring and beyond.

Scotland's single malts star at the **Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival** (April 29–May 2) and the **Talisker Skye & Lochalsh Food and Drink Festival** in late summer. The country's vigorous literary tradition takes possession of Glasgow with its **West End Festival** (June 10–26) and Ayrshire, home of the **Burns An' A' That** (May 20–29). This explosion of street theatre, music, and dance also has a gala concert with Lou Reed at the Culzean Castle in queue. The summer circus centers on Edinburgh, with a cultural flourish that includes the important and daring landmark **Fringe Festival** (August 7–29), the **International Festival** (opera, theatre, and dance; August 14–September 4), and the **International Film Festival** (August 17–28).

July is truly a moveable feast in Wales beginning with the **Cardiff International Food & Drink Festival** (July 8–10). In rural Llanelwedd, agriculture is king at the popular **Royal Welsh Show** (July 18–21), with sheep dog trials, trotting, and nearly a thousand small vendors. **The Big Cheese Festival** in Caerphilly (July 29–31) serves up the region's artisan cheese amid folk dancing, falconry, and troubadors. (Nearby thirteenth-century Caerphilly Castle is a Gothic must-see.)

The **Ludlow Marches Food Fair** (September 9–11) attracts enthusiastic crowds anxious to sample homemade sausage, pastries, and perries (a traditional drink made from fermented pears). In Yorkshire, the **Pontefract Liquorice Festival** (July 16–17) celebrates the medicinal herb and sweet cultivated locally since the fourteenth century. England's second largest city, Birmingham, now has two Michelin-starred restaurants in its Edgbaston neighborhood—modern British **Jessica's** (0121 455 0999) and the modern French **Simpson's Restaurant** (0121 454 3434).

For haute gastronomic ventures, Britain's capital city is hard to beat. The famously temperamental but beloved **Gordon Ramsay** and his namesake Chelsea restaurant (020 7352 4441) covet the only Michelin three-star honor in London.

International flavors are also well served here. From the Goan-region specialties of **The Bombay Brasserie** (020 7370 4040), to Hong Kong native Alan Yau's **Hakkasan** (020 7907 1888) and its brilliant dim sum, to David Thompson's sleek **Nahm** (020 7333 1234), the first Thai restaurant in Europe to garner a Michelin star, London covers the world. ❧

WHERE TO STAY

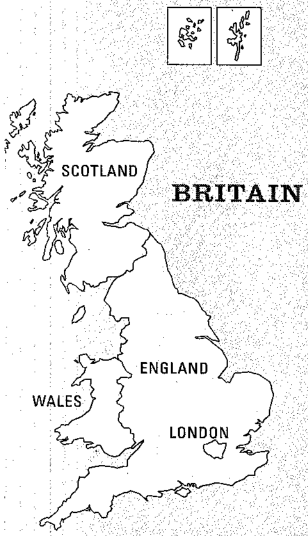
Match your style to Britain's country homes, snappy boutiques, and renovated breweries. Currently London's **Courthouse Hotel Kempinski** on Great Marlborough Street (020 7292 5555), a tongue-in-cheek makeover of the courthouse where Mick Jagger and John Lennon faced the music, is enjoying brand new buzz. The **Soho Hotel** (020 7559 3000) has made its own transformation to boutique hotel with two fifth-floor penthouses. There's retro-cool **Zetter** in Clerkenwell (020 7324 4444), and a bit of "la dolce vita" at the **Baglioni Hotel** (020 7368 5700) in Hyde Park with espresso machines in every room. In Henley-on-Thames (note: Royal Regatta in June), the old Brakspear's brewery is now the **Hotel du Vin** (01491 848400), a sportsman's hang with a 600-wine cellar.

Near Tremagogg in North Wales is **Plas Tan-yr-Allt** (01766 514 545), there's the six-room villa where Shelley lived in 1812-1813 which has just opened. An excellent value in coastal North Wales is eighteenth-century **Penhelig Arms** (01654 767 215), a charming seaside village inn.

For aspiring gentry, the new **Four Seasons Hotel Hampshire** (01252 863 000) in Dogsmersfield is a restored, fifteen-room Georgian manor house set on a 500-acre parkland estate. **Endsleigh House Hotel** (01822 870 248) is a Regency country house on Dartmoor in the West Country being renovated by designer Olga Polizzi (well known for her work with brother, Sir Rocco Forte); an early summer opening is planned.

Reserve away!

ondon
England
BRITAIN
Wales
Scotland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WALES
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Magic, passion, energy.
Whatever happened to the concept of
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When four distinct elements come together to form something delightful, it is, in essence, Britain. Find inspiration in the mystical beauty of Wales, or blissful serenity in an English garden. London hums with electricity, and Scotland combines a bold heritage with a spirited modernity.

With so much to choose from, it's easy to create your own Britain. And no matter how you shape it, your British experience will be full of history, heritage, transparent borders and warm, hospitable people.

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT'S LIKE A WHOLE OTHER COUNTRY

Texas is a state of contrasts where cowboys and culture easily coexist. Art shows and rodeos both draw big crowds. An evening at the ballet might be followed by two-stepping in a honky-tonk. Cowboy paintings by Remington and Russell hang in some of Texas' many art museums, but so do portraits by Rembrandt and Picasso.

This spring, contemporary art dominates the cultural scene as the first comprehensive traveling exhibition of Dan Flavin's career lights up, quite literally, the galleries at the **Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.** "Dan Flavin: A Retrospective," through June 5th, presents about forty-five drawings, sketches, collages, and installations, most of which use Flavin's favored medium of fluorescent light.

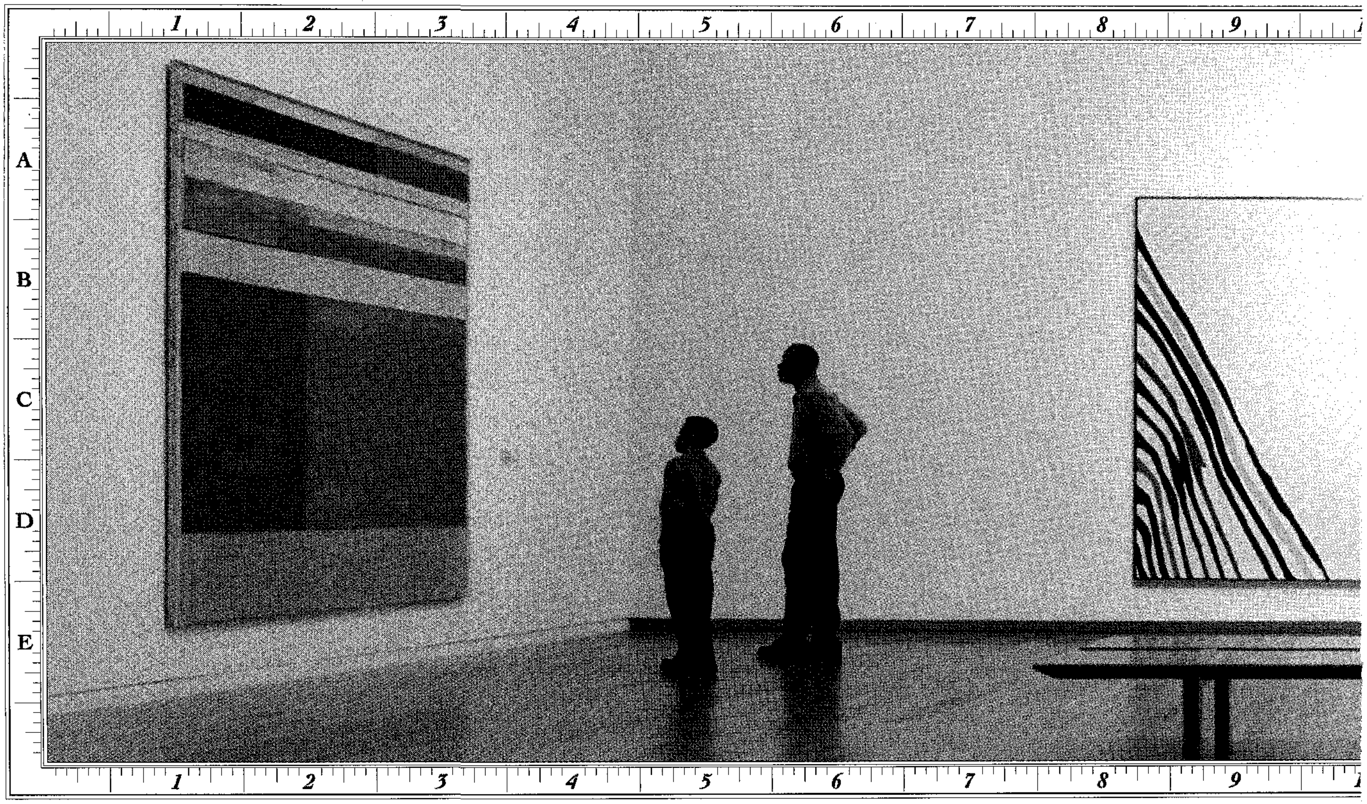
Open since 2003, the **Nasher Sculpture Center** in Dallas has installed a new Jonathan Borofsky sculpture, "Walking to the Sky." It's comprised of seven painted fiberglass figures of different races, ages, and genders walking up a steep angled hundred-foot-long pole. The Nasher's permanent collection includes sculptures by Calder, Giacometti, Matisse, Miró, Picasso, and Rodin.

Farther southeast, Houston's **Menil Collection** surveys more than seventy-five works on paper by Virgina-born Cy Twombly, who emerged in nineteen-fifties New York along with artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. The exhibition runs from May 27th to September 4th.

Museum-hopping can work up an appetite. Texan big cities and small towns alike offer great barbecue and chicken-fried steak, but some of the best new restaurants cross culinary borders. **Pesca on the River**, in the Watermark Hotel on San Antonio's River Walk, flies in seafood from all over the world. It puts a creative spin on such dishes as grouper, by pairing it with sweet potato curry and buttermilk fried onions. On South Congress Avenue in Austin, the **7** restaurant specializes in fresh seafood, such as pan-roasted *branzino* (Mediterranean sea bass) and Texas gulf shrimp. **Lanny's Alta Cocina Mexicana** in Fort Worth combines traditional regional Mexican cooking with international cuisine, for such dishes as seared Hyde Park foie gras served on a *bolillo,* a Mexican roll.

Texas is known for its dude ranches, but so-called *un*dude ranches are emerging as a stylish alternative. While they offer horseback riding and scenic country settings, these getaways are also the ultimate in luxury. At **Rough Creek Lodge** about

THE STAT



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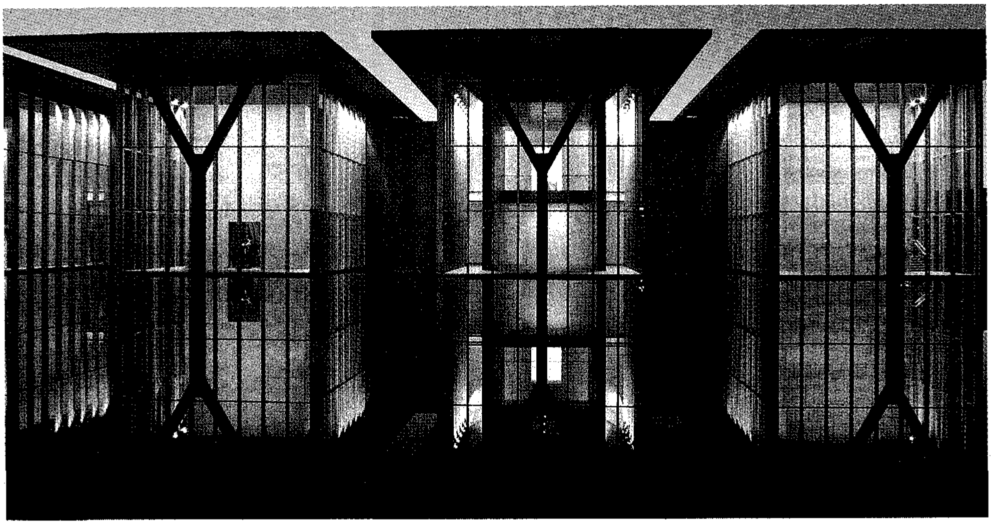


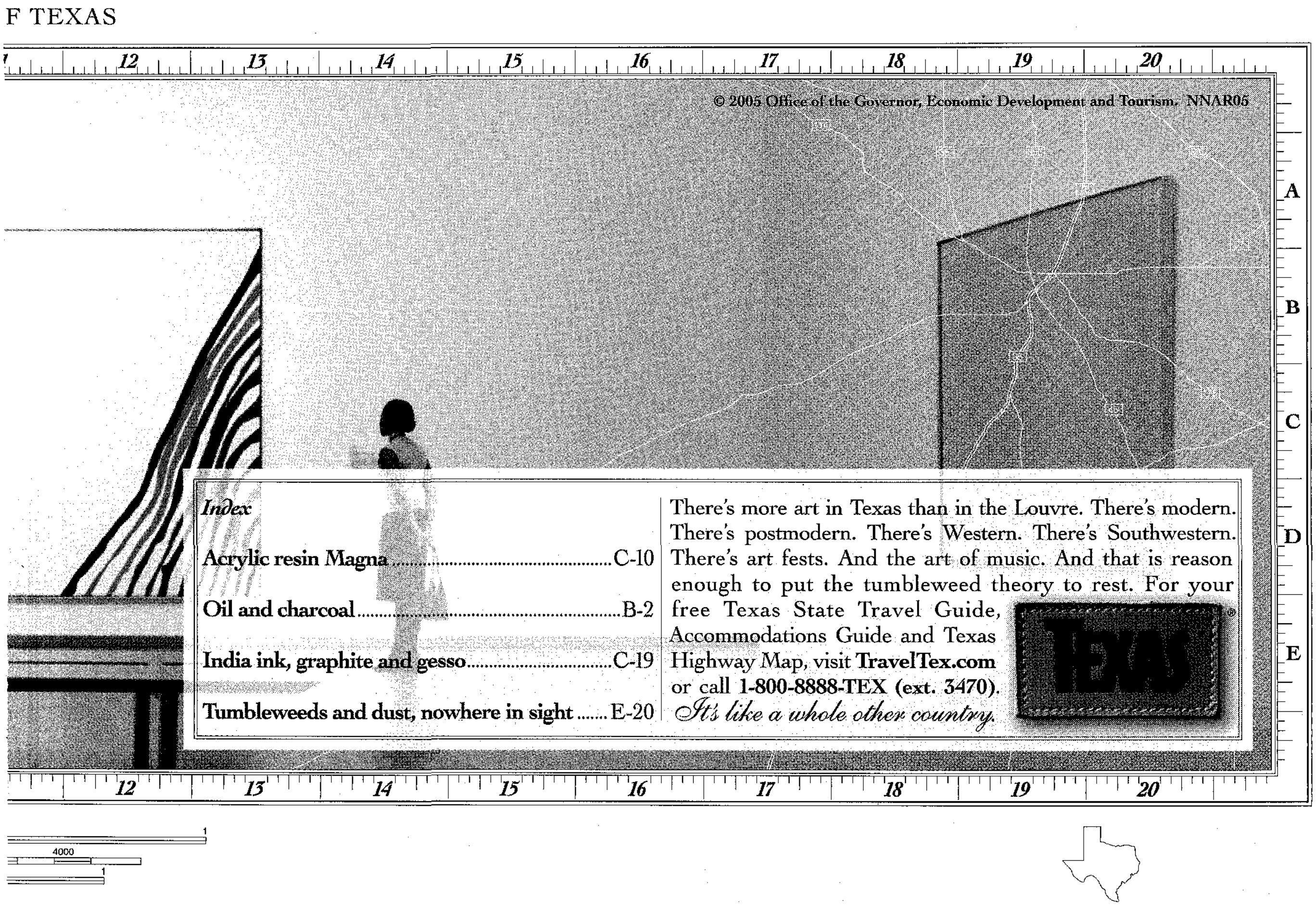
COURTESY OF MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH

seventy-five miles southwest of Dallas, guests can hunt, fish, go four-wheeling, get a massage or facial at the spa, and dine on Chef Gerard Thompson's upscale ranch food, such as tempura catfish or grilled Texas quail with Parmesan cheese grits.

Gulf Coast beaches, from condo-lined South Padre Island to historic Galveston Island, are adding amenities for visitors wanting more than to plant their feet in the sand. In Galveston, you can shop the boutiques of the **Strand Historic District** and then head over to **Big Reef Nature Park** on the island's eastern end. Its new nature trail leads to a lagoon for bird-watching, a pastime rapidly growing in popularity along the coast.

Speaking of sand, one of Texas' most exciting new golf courses is in the middle of the high desert. The Ambush course at the **Lajitas** resort, set on a 25,000-acre private estate near **Big Bend National Park**, can claim to be international. The eleventh hole is a par one with the green across the shallow river in Mexico. Since there's no border crossing, you can go for the hole in one but you can't putt out. Ambush's course has both lush green turf and native desert plants—yet another contrast that is so typically Texan.

TO PLAN YOUR NEXT TEXAS VACATION, CALL 800-8888-TEX, EXT. 3470 OR VISIT TRAVELTEX.COM FOR A FREE TRAVEL GUIDE.



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Acrylic resin Magna C-10

Oil and charcoal B-2

India ink, graphite and gesso C-19

Tumbleweeds and dust, nowhere in sight E-20

There's more art in Texas than in the Louvre. There's modern. There's postmodern. There's Western. There's Southwestern. There's art fests. And the art of music. And that is reason enough to put the tumbleweed theory to rest. For your free Texas State Travel Guide, Accommodations Guide and Texas Highway Map, visit **TravelTex.com** or call **1-800-8888-TEX (ext. 3470).**

It's like a whole other country.

THE CARIBBEAN'S DUTCH TREAT

When the seventeenth-century Dutch settled the island of Curaçao, they created a mini-Holland in the warm Caribbean. They built gabled townhouses with red-tile roofs in the harbor town of **Willemstad**. Inland, they constructed plantation homes—called *landhuizen*—with elegant galleries and arcades. And they dotted the landscape with picturesque windmills.

But despite its Old World feel, Curaçao is still a Caribbean paradise. Its numerous Dutch colonial buildings are painted in sun-loving pinks, yellows, and blues. Nearly forty beaches surround the island—ranging from secluded coves to broad swaths of white sand.

Beneath the waves lapping its beaches lies a wonderful diving destination. There are fifty-seven species of coral including star, flower, and brain coral, as well as 500 species of sea life, such as angelfish, yellowtail snapper, parrotfish, rays, and sea turtles. The **Curaçao Underwater Park** has twelve miles of coral reef with underwater wrecks, including a coral-encrusted tugboat.

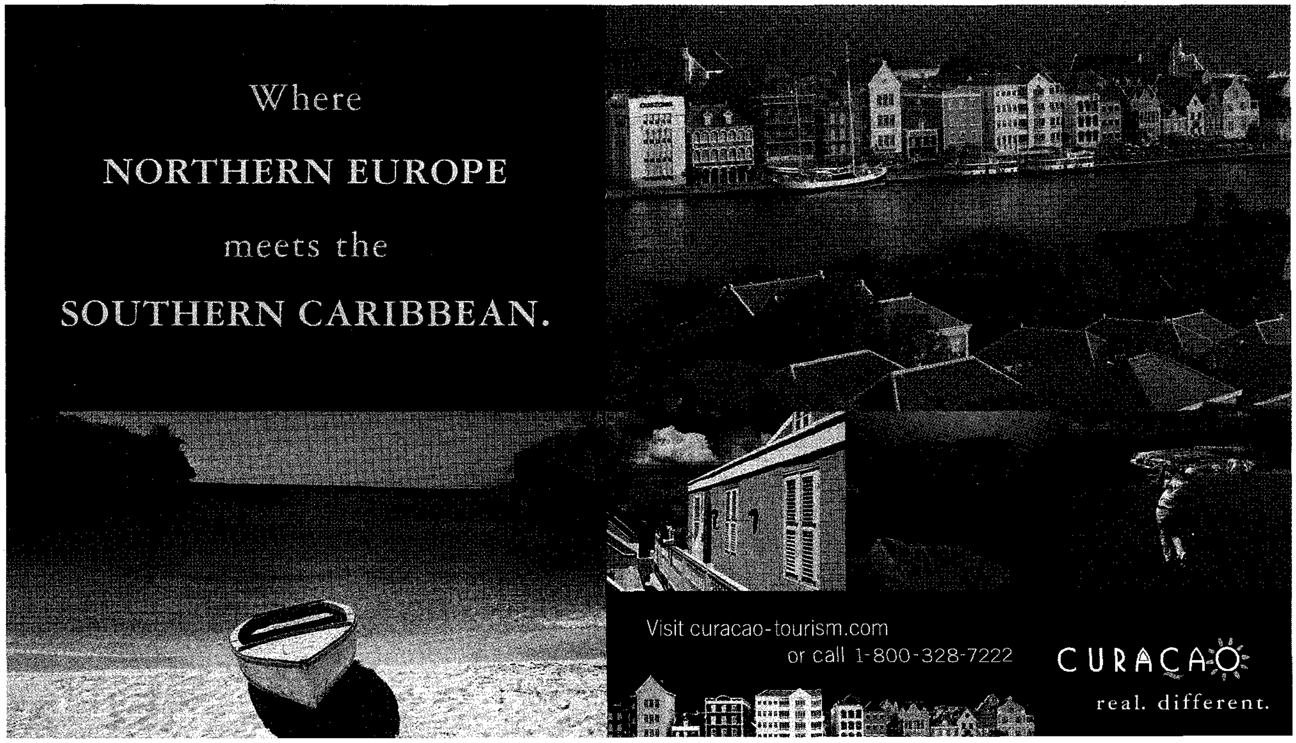
Curaçao is the Caribbean at its cosmopolitan best. More than fifty nationalities live here, which means that food lovers can savor many flavors—European, African, South American, Caribbean, and Asian. For the quintessential Curaçaon experience, there's the **Old Marshe** or Old Market in Willemstad, where visitors can sample traditional favorites such as *funchi*, a polenta-like side dish, or *piska hasa*, Curaçaon-style red snapper.

The historic district of Willemstad known as Otrabanda is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Here, the **Curaçao Museum** showcases traditional and contemporary artists, while the **Museum Kurá Hulanda** examines the history of the African slave trade. Other buildings contain art galleries, chic boutiques, or elegant restaurants.

Located well below the hurricane belt, Curaçao's tranquil trade winds keep temperatures at a pleasant eighty-two degrees year-round. And, it's easily accessible to Americans, thanks to frequent connections from major U.S. gateways. Flights from New York City are about five-and-a-half hours.

TO PLAN YOUR NEXT CURAÇAO VACATION, CALL 800-328-7222 OR VISIT CURACAO-TOURISM.COM

Save up to $200 at participating hotels through December 15, 2005. Details at curacao-tourism.com



Sample Air + 5 nights' vacation packages at the Curaçao Marriott Beach Resort and Emerald Casino for travel between July 1 and October 31, 2005. New York City from $930. For details call Expedia at 1-800-596-7735

Sample packages include 5 nights' accommodation at the Curaçao Marriott Beach Resort and Emerald Casino, plus roundtrip air for travel between July 1 and October 31, 2005. Prices include taxes and fees for flight, are per person based on double occupancy and vary by dates, availability, and departure city. Rates are subject to changes, exceptions, cancellation charges, and restrictions. Not responsible for errors or omissions in this ad. Additional higher priced packages available. © 2005 Expedia, Inc. All rights reserved. CST: 2029030-40.

A WORLD OF INFLUENCES IN AMERICA'S CARIBBEAN

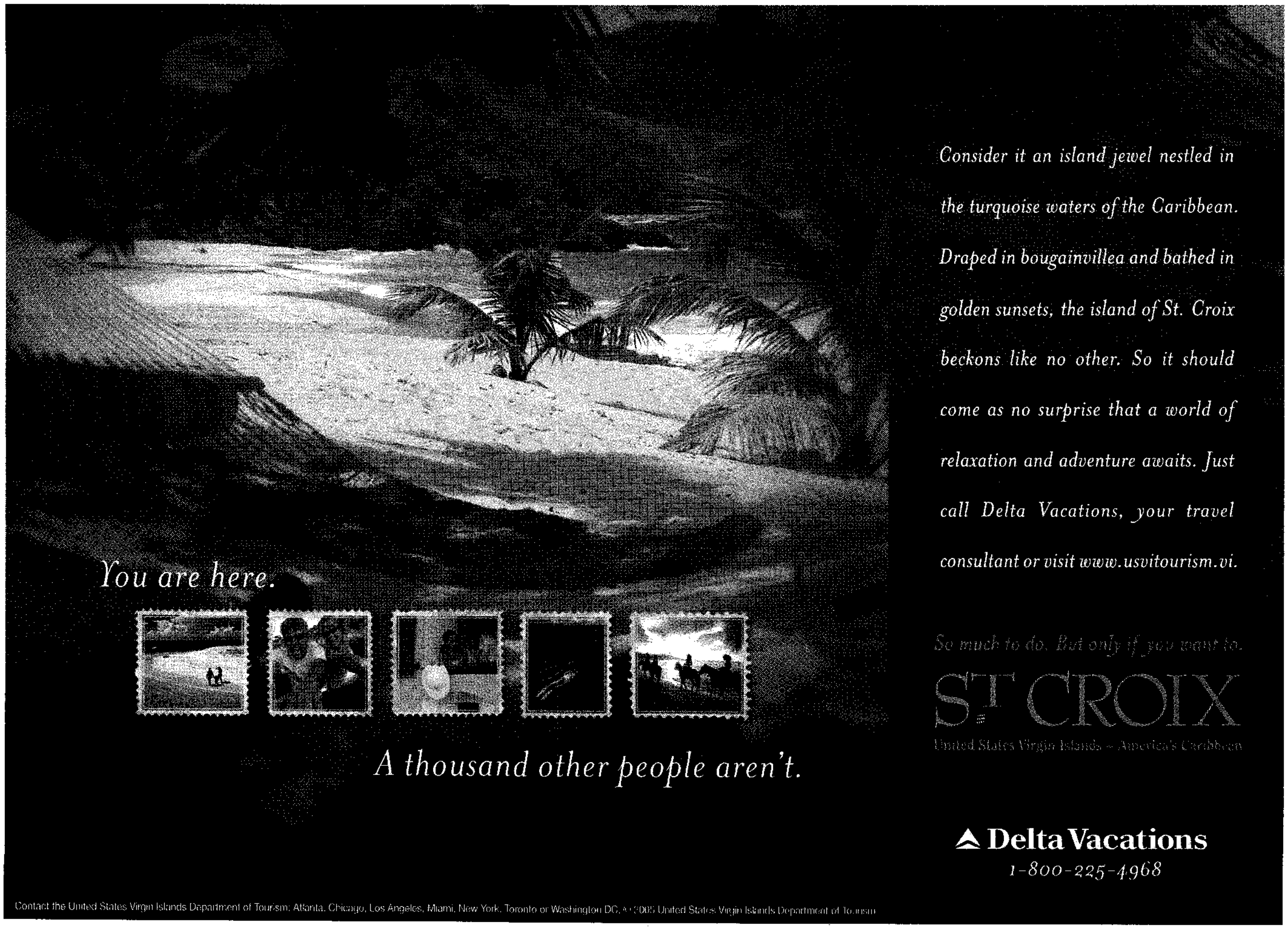
The United States Virgin Islands has flown under seven flags since it was discovered by Christopher Columbus. Its three major islands—**St. Croix, St. John,** and **St. Thomas**—are culturally a part of the sunny and blithe West Indies, but its eclectic European veneer lends visitors a strong sense of history, even to those lured by such amenities as snorkeling, beachcombing, and golf.

Denmark dominated the territory for more than two hundred years, until the United States purchased it in 1917. The St. Croix colonial towns of **Christiansted** and **Frederiksted** offer charming byways with pastel buildings and quaint boutiques. Visitors can ride horseback past historic sugar mills and Danish plantations, and golf on spectacular courses such as the coastline-hugging **Mahogany Run Golf Club**. Or they can wander the pristine white-sand beaches of **Cane Bay** or **Issacs Bay** beaches. The nearly thousand-acre nature reserve at **Buck Island National Reef Monument** is also a leisurely catamaran ride away.

Two-thirds of St. John, the smallest, most secluded of the three isles, is a national park best characterized by its unspoiled natural beauty. The island's relaxed pace—complete with feral burros—is perfect for enjoying beaches such as **Trunk, Cinnamon,** and **Salt Pond** bays. Scenic **Coral Bay** has remarkable ocean views from a hilltop belvedere.

St. Thomas offers a wide range of sophisticated dining and resorts, and there's no shortage of duty-free shopping throughout the island. Harbor town **Charlotte Amalie** may brim with the energy that comes from being a major cruise ship port, but peaceful beaches are also readily found. The crescent-shaped beach at **Magens Bay** is known for its calm and shallow waters, set among lush, subtropical greenery. Here, the U.S. Virgin Islands only *feels* like a world away.

TO PLAN YOUR NEXT U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS VACATION CALL 800-372-USVI OR VISIT USVITOURISM.VI


You are here.
A thousand other people aren't.
So much to do. But only if you want to.
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Delta Vacations

Consider it an island jewel nestled in the turquoise waters of the Caribbean. Draped in bougainvillea and bathed in golden sunsets, the island of St. Croix beckons like no other. So it should come as no surprise that a world of relaxation and adventure awaits. Just call Delta Vacations, your travel consultant or visit www.usvitourism.vi.

1-800-225-4968

Contact the United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism: Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Toronto or Washington DC. © 2005 United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism

[Explore] *Colorado*

WILLIAM MANNING/CORBIS

NATURAL WONDERS

It's at this time of year when Colorado begins to trade its snowy white cloak for a green one. And as ski season ends, hikers and mountain bikers gradually stream into the Rockies; wildflowers blanket the alpine meadows in the summer; and aspens glimmer with new leaves.

But the state owes its natural beauty to much more than its mountains. **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve** includes wetlands, uplands, and forest. Last year, public and private groups combined to purchase 97,000 acres of ranch land, which was merged with both public and private lands to create this new national treasure. Some of the area's remarkably varied land was also used to form the state's largest wildlife preserve, the **Baca National Wildlife Refuge**, home to migratory songbirds, eagles, mule deer, elk, and coyotes.

One of the best ways to appreciate Colorado's wide-ranging terrain is from a railroad observation car. The newest passenger service runs not through the mountains but through the bottom of the thousand-foot-deep Royal Gorge. The **Royal Gorge Route Railroad** follows the rushing Arkansas River at the base of rocky cliffs. Sample fresh salmon in an elegant dining car or sign on for a special "murder mystery train" featuring actors in an old-fashioned whodunit.

With the seasonal change, ski resorts transform venues into those suitable for classical, jazz, and blues concerts. Brahms and Bartók come to **Breckenridge** in June for its twenty-fifth anniversary music festival running through early September. In Aspen, music aficionados can ride in a gondola to Aspen Mountain for concerts every weekend. Or they can attend the **Jazz Aspen Snowmass** fest, going strong since 1991, which last year featured Buddy Guy and Wynton Marsalis.

On the visual arts scene, the **Denver Art Museum** hosts two exhibitions that explore the intersection of textiles and contemporary art. "Amish Quilts: Kaleidoscope of Color," with about a hundred quilts on display through June 19th, shows how the utilitarian objects made by Amish women foreshadowed, perhaps unintentionally, the compositions of abstract artists such as Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Mark Rothko. Through July 10th, "No Boundaries: Fiber + Art" showcases works by artists such as Chuck Close that examine the interweaving of fine art and fiber art.

Some of the world's highest golf courses are in Colorado. **The Fossil Trace Golf Club** in Golden has a challenging course designed by Jim Engh and is located at the base of foothills. Sandstone pillars containing Triceratops footprints and fossils of palm fronds rise adjacent to the twelfth green. One of the best new golf courses is **The Rio Grande Club** in South Fork. The sixth hole features a shot across the famous river and a 600-foot ascent through the back nine.

In February, downtown Boulder's first luxury, full-service hotel and spa in a hundred years, the **St Julien Hotel & Spa**, opened a block from Pearl Street's chic boutiques, galleries, and restaurants. Its spacious, modern rooms and suites feature oversized bathrooms with soaking tubs and views of the Flatiron Mountains. Signature treatments at its 10,000-square-foot spa are created from the Rocky Mountain State's indigenous plants.

With so much going on all around Colorado year-round, who's going to miss the snow? ෴

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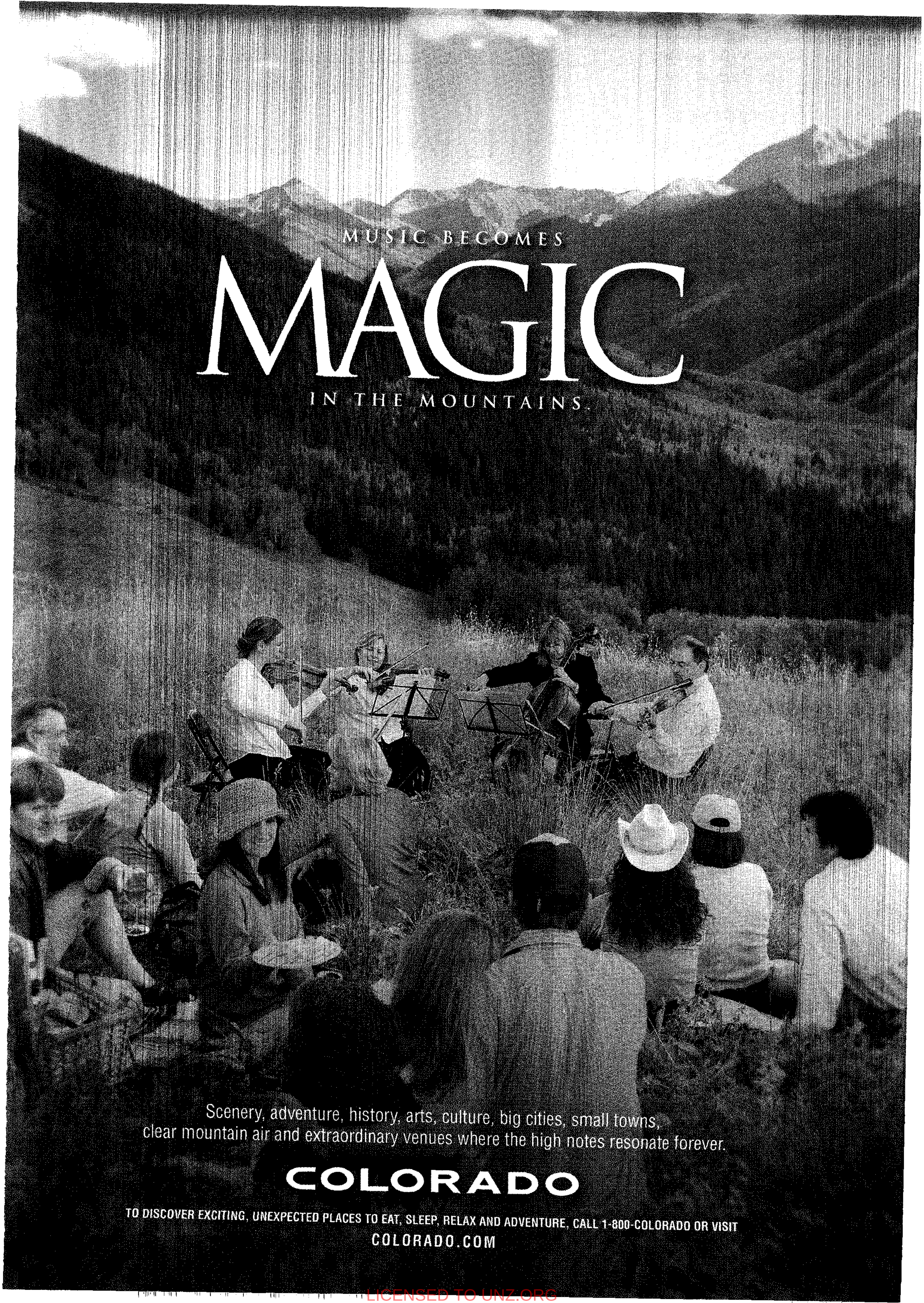
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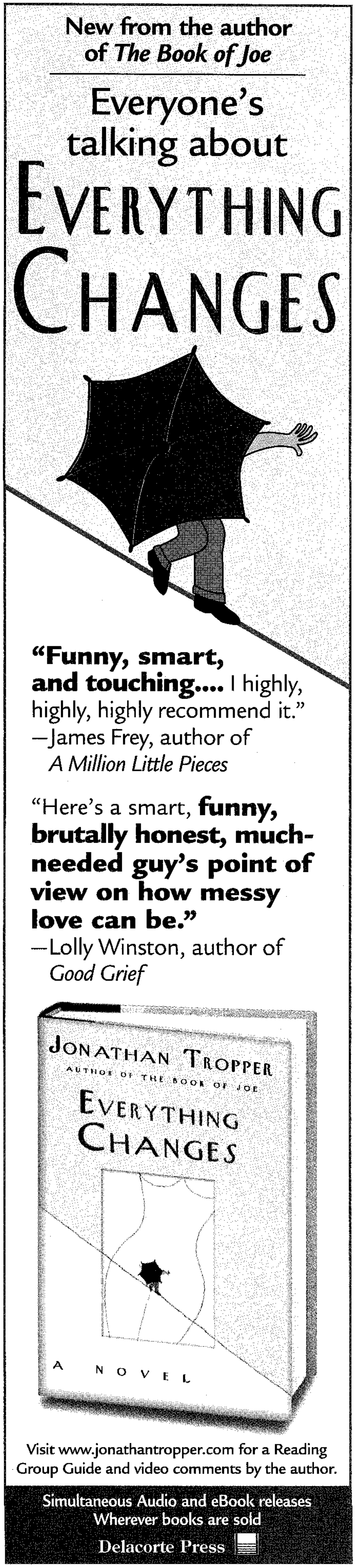
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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

THE PARACHUTE ARTIST

Have Tony Wheeler's guidebooks travelled too far?

BY TAD FRIEND

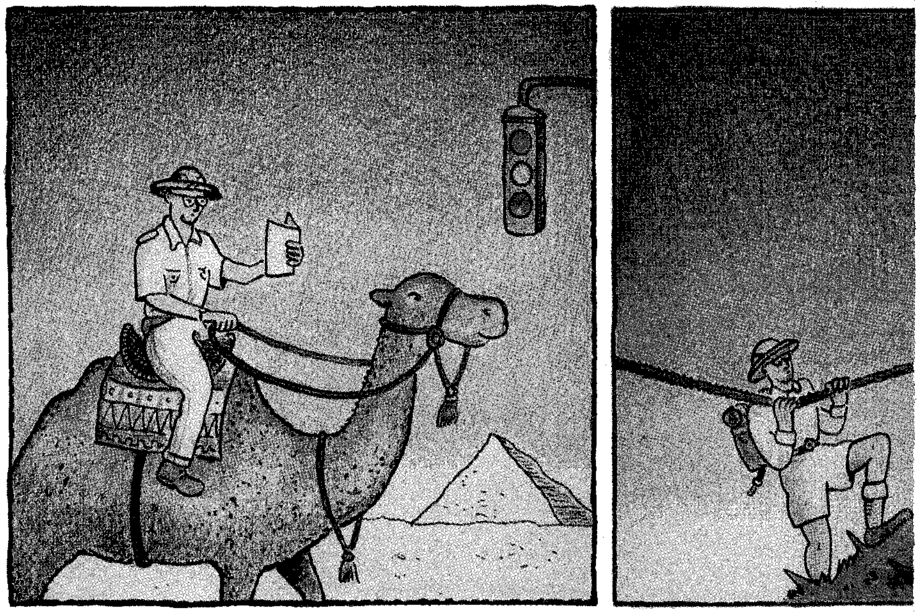
On the evening after the rainiest summer day in Melbourne's history, Tony Wheeler's dinner guests, who were British, wanted to discuss the weather. Wheeler gradually redirected the conversation to the Falkland Islands. He had recently written a new Lonely Planet guide to the Falklands, and also one to East Timor, exactly the sort of backpacker destinations that he and his wife, Maureen, had in mind when they established Lonely Planet, in 1973, as the scruffy but valiant enemy of the cruise ship and the droning tour guide. The Wheelers' guests, who were touring Australia, were Roger Twiney, a flatmate of Tony's in England in the early seventies, and Roger's wife, Susanne. As both couples sat in the Wheelers' living room, watching the sun set across the Yarra River, Tony spoke of the Falklands' king and rockhopper penguins; of tracing Ernest Shackleton's footsteps on South Georgia Island; and of the peculiarities of the local "squidocracy," those grown rich from fishing the cephalopod mollusk.

"But isn't it cold, windy, inhospitable?" Roger asked.

"No, no!" Tony said. "It's just like Yorkshire."

"*I'm* from Yorkshire," Susanne said, with a don't-tell-me-about-Yorkshire tone.

"Well, the Falklands actually get less snow than your home region!" Tony replied, seeming confident that she would be as delighted by this arresting fact as he was. Susanne fell silent.



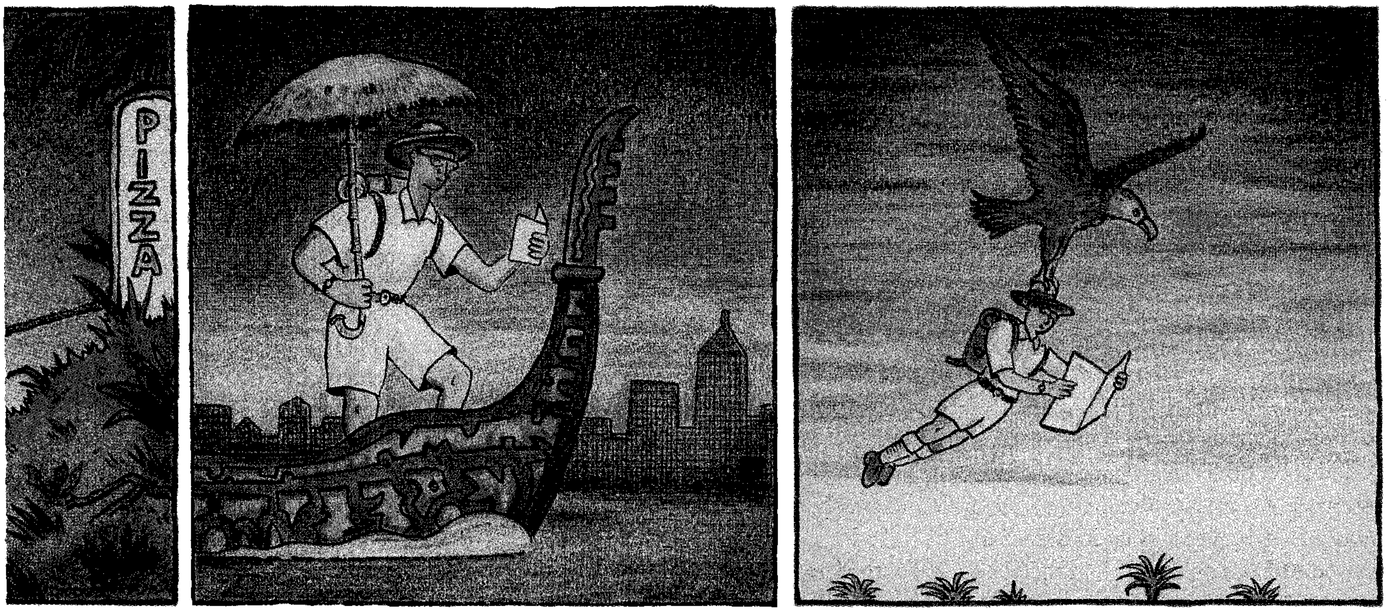
"Lonely Planet created a floating fourth world of people who travelled full time," one wr

A slight, graying man of fifty-eight, Tony Wheeler is at least two people. Tony No. 1, who goes to the office every day in subfusc clothing and carries a passport from his native Britain, is so self-contained that he appears, as a colleague puts it, "almost socially retarded." When he gave me a tour of Lonely Planet's head office, in Melbourne, not one of the three hundred eager twenty- and thirty-somethings who work there greeted him as he passed. "I met Tony in our Oakland office a few years ago and I expected him to be this huge presence, this Tony Robbins of travel," Debra Miller, a Lonely Planet author, says. "But he's sort of the Woody Allen of travel."

Like one of those dehydrated sponges

which inflate to astonishing size when dropped into their proper element, Wheeler becomes a vastly different and more voluble person when he's on a trip (or recalling or anticipating a trip). This is Tony No. 2, who carries a passport from his adopted Australia. Tony No. 2 and Maureen and I were leaving the next day for the Sultanate of Oman. They were then going on to Ethiopia, and later this year Wheeler planned to visit Macau, Shanghai, Singapore, Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Iceland, and Japan, and to sweep from Cape Town to Casablanca by air safari.

Tony No. 2 relishes being the face of Lonely Planet and of independent travel, regularly rising before dawn—and ignoring Maureen's tart remarks—to appear on Australia's "Today" show, a program that he acknowledges is "pretty awful." He is a valued guest because, having explored a hundred and seventeen countries, he can speak knowledgeably on almost any topic, from the issues faced by rickshaw drivers in Calcutta to such larger mysteries as why Egypt lacks a major industry. Like Benjamin Franklin and the Norway rat, he is a citizen of the world.



ys. The company now markets some six hundred and fifty titles, from "Aboriginal Australia" to "Zion and Bryce Canyon."

GLEN BAXTER

His company's reach is equally broad. Lonely Planet now markets some six hundred and fifty titles, from "Aboriginal Australia" to "Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks," in a hundred and eighteen countries. With annual sales of more than six million guidebooks—about a quarter of all the English-language guidebooks sold—it is the world's largest publisher of travel guides.

"Lonely Planet is the bible in places like India," Mark Ellingham, the founder of Rough Guides, the cheeky British series, says. "If they recommend the Resthouse Bangalore, then half the guesthouses there rename themselves Resthouse Bangalore." The series' authority is such that the team accompanying Jay Garner, the first American administrator of occupied Iraq, used "Lonely Planet Iraq" to draw up a list of historical sites that should not be bombed or looted. The writers Marianne Wiggins, Jilly Cooper, and Pico Iyer have used Lonely Planet guides to immerse themselves in the feel of a far-off locale for novels set in, respectively, Cameroon, Colombia, and Iran. And, in perhaps the greatest tribute, the Vietnamese have begun to manufacture ersatz Lonely Planet guides to complement their line of fake Rolexes.

At the same time, however, a number of the company's authors worry that Lonely Planet itself has begun to manufacture ersatz Lonely Planet guides. As the company has expanded to cover Europe and America, markets already jammed with travel guides, it has been updating many of its guidebooks every two years, which requires that it use more and more contributors for each book—twenty-seven for the forthcoming edition of the United States guide alone. The books' iconoclastic tone has been muted to cater to richer, fussier sorts of travellers, many of whom, like the Wheelers themselves, fly business class. And Lonely Planet's original flagship, its "shoestring" series for backpackers, today makes up only three per cent of the company's sales.

"Our Hawaii book used to be written for people who were picking their own guava and sneaking into the resort pool, and we were getting killed by the competition," a Lonely Planet author named Sara Benson told me. "So we relaunched it for a more typical two-week American mid-market vacation. That sold, but it didn't feel very Lonely Planet." Every Lonely Planet series was relaunched last year in a slicker format that jettisoned much of the discussion of local history and economics; the books now commence, as most guides do, with snappy "Highlights" and "Itineraries." "We're trying to insinuate ourselves into Tony Wheeler's world," Mike Spring, the publisher of the hotels-and-fine-dining-focussed Frommer's Travel Guides, says, "and he's trying to insinuate himself into ours."

Around the time of the relaunch, the Wheelers relinquished day-to-day control of the company, but they still own seventy per cent of it. Tony keeps looking for new places to cover, and he and Maureen continue to reject offers to license the company's name. John Singleton, an Australian advertising magnate whose limited partnership owns the rest of Lonely Planet, says, "Tony and Maureen would rather be broke

"I'm gay! I'm gay!"

• •

than be prostitutes, and God bless 'em."

Yet over the years, Wheeler seems to suspect, something essential was lost. "Those vivid colors of the early books," he said to me, "once they get blended with so many other authors and editors and concerns about what the customer wants, they inevitably become gray and bland. It's entropy, isn't it?"

At dinner with the Twineys, as Tony was uncorking a fourth bottle of wine, Maureen Wheeler mentioned her chronic insomnia. An ardent woman with a deeply amused laugh, she grew up in Belfast and moved to London in 1970, at the age of twenty. Within a week, she had met Tony on a park bench when he noticed her copy of Tolstoy's "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth." Before too long, they were off to Afghanistan in a decrepit 1964 Austin minivan. "I keep waking up from the same dream," she said now. "My father, who actually died when I was twelve, is still alive, but I'm a spinster, with no prospects."

"I just had a dream where I was being chased through a shopping center, and I was in a dark room with all these doors, and they were all shut but one," Tony said. "I was trying to get out that door, and it kept shrinking—and then about fifty women came through the door and prevented me from getting out."

"It's funny," Maureen said. "Because you of all the people I know are the one person who does exactly what he wants at all times." Her voice was taking on an Irish lilt, as it does when she gets worked up. "You're never thwarted. You go off and do what you like and leave everyone else to clean up the mess."

"Oh, *now*," Tony said. "It's funny. I never have sexy dreams, or frightening dreams, just dreams of annoyance and frustration."

"Dreams are surreal," Maureen said. "They reveal something important by twisting and heightening it."

"Surreal just means 'not real,'" Tony said crossly. "Dreams are dumb."

In the late nineteen-eighties, I travelled in Asia for a year, and the Lonely Planet guides were my lifeline. I ate and slept where they told me to, on Khao San Road in Bangkok and Anjuna Beach in Goa; I oriented myself by their scrupulous if naïvely drawn maps; and on long bus rides I immersed myself in the Indonesia book's explanation of the Ramayana story. The guides didn't tell me to wear drawstring pants and Tintin T-shirts or to crash my moped—I picked that up on my own—but they did teach me, as they taught a whole generation, how to move through the world alone and with confidence.

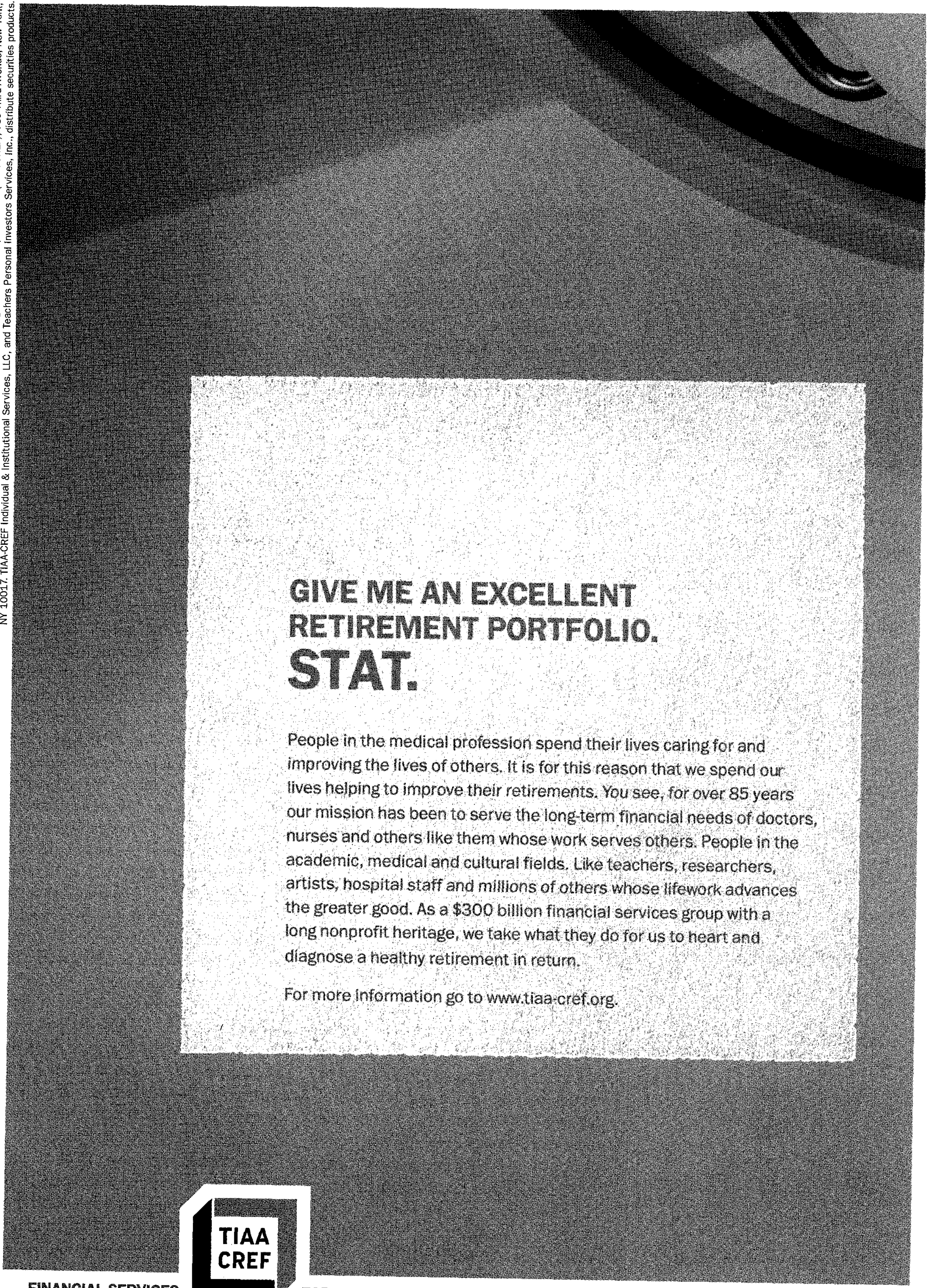
I learned to stuff my gear into one knapsack; never to ask a local where I should eat but, rather, where *he* ate; never to judge a country by its capital city; never to stay near a mosque (the muezzin wakes you); how to haggle; and, crucially, when I later went to Mongolia, to shout "*Nokhoi khor!*"—"Hold the dog!"—before entering a yurt. When you spend months with a guidebook that speaks to you in an intimate, conversational tone, it becomes a bosom companion.

Through studying "The Lonely Planet Story" at the back of the books and talking with other travellers, I versed myself in the creation myth: how, after meandering across Asia's Hippie Trail for nine months and fetching up in Sydney with only twenty-seven cents, the Wheelers self-published "Across Asia on the Cheap," in 1973. The ninety-four-page pamphlet, which Tony had written at their kitchen table, sold eighty-five hundred copies in Australian bookstores. With its buccaneering opinions on the textures of daily life—"The inertial effect of religion is nowhere more clearly seen than with India's sacred cows, they spread disease, clutter already overcrowded towns, consume scarce food (and waste paper) and provide nothing"—the book hearkened back to the confident sweep of the great European guides of a century before. Guidebooks had emerged in the early eighteen-hundreds as a resource for Byronic travellers in search of picturesque views, but the best of them illuminated an entire way of life. "Baedeker's London and Its Environs 1900" told readers, for instance, that the city's public baths were "chiefly for the working class who may obtain a cold bath for one penny."

After spending another year in Asia, in 1975, Tony and Maureen holed up in a fleabag hotel in Singapore for three months while he wrote "South-East Asia on a Shoestring." Tony's former profession—in England, he had been an engineer at Chrysler—clearly influenced the books' format: they read like engineering reports, with topics such as "History," "Climate," and "Fauna & Flora" to contend with before you got to the actual sights. This eat-your-vegetables earnestness made reading the books feel like taking up a vocation.

"Lonely Planet created a floating fourth world of people who travelled full time," Pico Iyer says. "The guides encouraged a counter-Victorian way of life, in that they exactly reversed the old imperial assumptions. Now the other cultures are seen as the wise place, and we are taught to defer to them." A passage from my old Lonely Planet "Thailand" is illustrative:

> Recently, when staying in Phuket for an extended period (Kata-Karon-Naiharn area),



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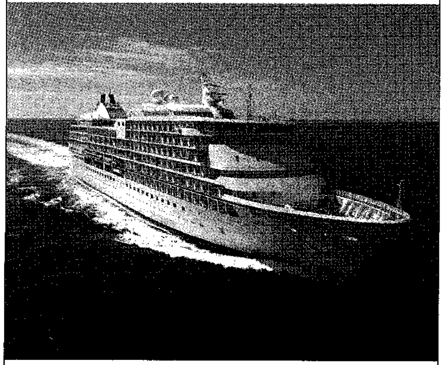

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> I talked with a few Thai bungalow/restaurant proprietors who said that nudity on the beaches was what bothered them most about foreign travellers. These Thais took nudity as a sign of disrespect on the part of the travelers for the locals, rather than as a libertarian symbol or modern custom. I was even asked to make signs that they could post forbidding or discouraging nudity—I declined, forgoing a free bungalow for my stay.

Note the pointed assertion of independence—and the seemingly casual aside that it was an "extended" stay. There was a self-righteousness about the tone, of course, but I liked that Lonely Planet, unlike the other major guidebooks, didn't accept advertisements, and that it donated five per cent of its profits to charity. (After the tsunami in December, the company gave nearly four hundred thousand dollars toward relief efforts.)

I did occasionally wonder just how independent I was learning to be. When Lonely Planet set me down on an island like Ko Samui, then relatively unspoiled but already speckled with bungalows, I realized that I was seeing a parallel Thailand that bore little relation to the "real" thing. Serving up cultural comfort food is a traditional feature—or failing—of guides. Cairo is "no more than a winter suburb of London," an 1898 Cook's Tours pamphlet assured tourists. Richard Bangs, the co-founder of Mountain Travel Sobek, the adventure travel company, says that Lonely Planet travellers "like to think they're out there on the edge, but they're all reading the bible and moving in big flocks."

Yet Tony Wheeler's most important advice—reprinted in the guides until last year's relaunch—was "Just go!" Don't book hotels, don't worry unduly about shots and itineraries or even buying a guidebook—just go. This was an existential call to arms that amounted to a politics and even a morality: more than one Lonely Planet author told me that had George W. Bush ever really travelled abroad the United States would not have invaded Iraq. The most serious political wrangle the company has got into is over publishing its Myanmar book despite international sanctions against that country and the stand taken by the country's Nobel Peace Prize-winning dissident, Aung San Suu Kyi, who has urged travellers to boycott the junta. Lonely Planet's "Myanmar (Burma)" guide pays deference to her argument, and lists the ways that you can minimize supporting the government, but concludes that travel "is the type of communication that in the long term can change lives and unseat undemocratic governments."

Movements like Lonely Planet need their martyrs, and in the eighties I heard stories in guesthouses across Asia that Tony Wheeler had recently died in spectacular fashion. There were hundreds of variations of the tale, but all had Wheeler running out of luck at the end of the trail somewhere: in a train, bus, or motorcycle accident; from malaria; at a bullfight; at the hands of the mujahideen. Not for nothing was the "South-East Asia" guide, with its distinctive yolk-colored cover, known as the "yellow bible." Even today, there are animated discussions on Lonely Planet's online forum, "The Thorn Tree," about whether Wheeler is the Jesus of travel or the Moses, "since the LP was not written, it was revealed."

High in the western Hajar mountains in northern Oman, our four-wheel-drive Honda lurched down a dirt pass. The one-lane road plunged among the crags toward the goal far below: Wadi Bani Awf, an arroyo filled with date palms, a rare vein of green in an arid land. The brakes were squeaking and giving off a worrisome odor, and my right thigh quivered from jabbing the nonexistent passenger-side brake pedal whenever Tony bent to peer at the odometer, checking the trip distances listed in the Lonely Planet guide. He wasn't planning to write about Oman—the Wheelers were here simply out of curiosity—but he checks every fact, everywhere. As the Lonely Planet author Ryan Ver Berkmoes puts it, "Tony is a trainspotter to the world."

"This is rather nice, isn't it?" Tony said. "Not a bad road at all." From the back seat, Maureen gave a small sigh.

Glimpsing a sign for the mountain village of Bilad Sayt, Tony stopped just past the turnoff. "Let's go see it, shall we?" he said. He began a three-point turn, backing toward the cliff. "Oh, dear," Maureen said. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, drat!" The car kept backing. "Stop!"

He stopped, six inches from the edge, and, after a moment, we all laughed. "I'm fine and so are you," Tony said. And the village proved to be a wonder—a cluster of mud-brick houses clinging like a wasp's nest to a cliff, circled by falcons. We might have taken the turnoff not to

Bilad Sayt but to the seventeenth century.

Travelling with the Wheelers is like that—you take every side road and see much more than you expect, much more convivially, and at much higher speed. It began at the Dubai airport: Tony and Maureen, who travel very light, charged up the stairs to get to the front of the line at immigration, leaving me feeling sheepish for taking the escalator like everyone else. As we waited at the Hertz counter, Tony studied the road map that he had brought along and announced, "Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the two countries with the highest rate of road accidents." Then he was largely silent as we drove south, ignoring even the first camels.

The Lonely Planet guide had been rather vague about the procedure for crossing into Oman here, near Hatta, and on arriving at the Oman border we were told that we needed first to officially leave the Emirates—there had been an unmarked checkpoint at the Hatta Fort Hotel, a few miles back.

"We're in legal limbo," Tony said, as we headed north. "Here we are coming back to the U.A.E., and we're going to have to explain why we haven't left yet."

"We're going to have to explain this better in the book," Maureen said.

"When you're leaving J.F.K. Airport," Tony continued, "they don't ask you to go to the Hilton to get your passport stamped. So *this is interesting*."

Finding this Tony—Tony No. 2—was like tuning in a distant radio station late at night: nothing, nothing, and then a sudden flare of chatter. This occurred whenever he saw something strange: a pedestrian underpass in the middle of nowhere, an oddly translated sign—"Sale of Ice Cubes"—or the goat souk in Nizwa, where potential buyers give the billy goats' testicles a considering squeeze.

For more than a week, we moved through Oman's northern, more populous half in a long, clockwise oval. The days would begin with a 7:30 A.M. breakfast at which Tony buried himself in his map and Lonely Planet's "Oman and the United Arab Emirates" and regional Arabian Peninsula guides, plotting the stops en route to that night's hotel, which would usually be the best available. (The Wheelers' room at the Chedi, in the capital, Muscat, cost some four hundred dollars a night.) He would toggle between the books, frowning: the Oman book provided far better cultural context but was woefully out of date. (No new edition was being readied, because the guide had sold only thirty-two thousand copies since it was published, in 2000.) And then, abruptly, we were off. Tony drove, and Maureen chatted or sang "Landslide" or "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" in a pleasing contralto, and we were in and out of the car all day long until nightfall. A few minutes into any museum or souk, you'd see Tony's eyes turn glassy, and he'd twitch his map-of-Africa cap and say, "On, on."

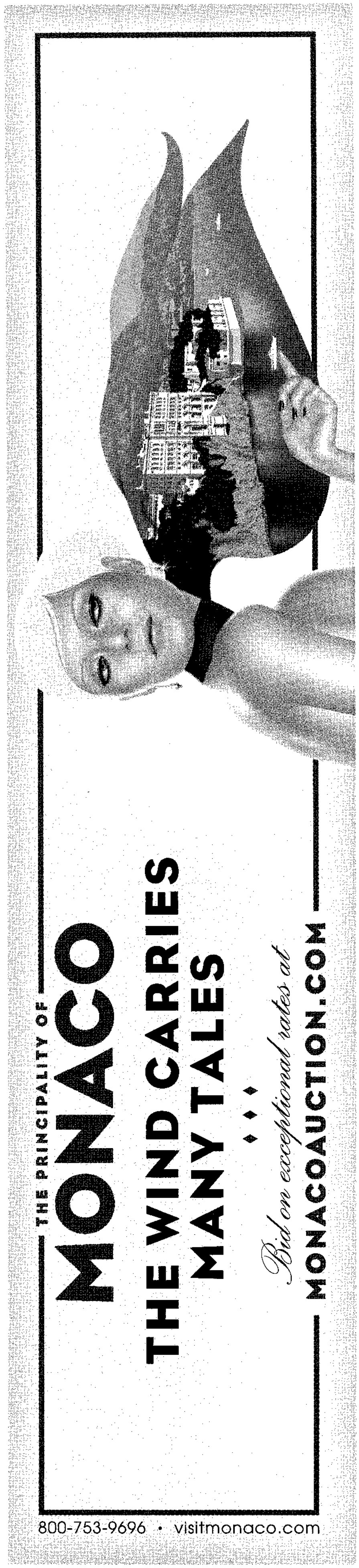
When Wheeler was ten, he asked for a globe and a filing cabinet for Christmas, and he is still a mixture of impulsive and compulsive—ideal qualities for a guidebook writer. He told me, "To research a big guidebook, you need some people who live in the country, but you also need some parachute artists, someone who can drop into a place and quickly assimilate, who can write about anywhere. I'm a parachute artist."

We began to orient ourselves around the country's ruler, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, whose portrait—which shows a bearded, gravely smiling man with warm brown eyes—is as omnipresent as his public-works projects. Every museum in Muscat devoted extravagant space to Qaboos's achievements (though none mentioned, as the Lonely Planet guides did, that he had kicked out the previous sultan, his father, in a bloodless coup in 1970, or that Qaboos's father had been so resistant to Western innovation that he had banned even eyeglasses). A phrase from the English-language Oman *Daily Observer* became one of our refrains: "The Sultan is always thinking of the benefit of his people."

Well aware that the country's petroleum reserves are dwindling, Sultan Qaboos has encouraged "Omanization," in which guest workers will be replaced by Omanis—and yet almost every hotel and restaurant we went to was staffed by Indians. And so "Omanization" became another, mildly sardonic refrain, as recurrent as Maureen's remark whenever we left a restaurant recommended by Lonely Planet: "Take it out of the book."

"The Omanis don't have a café culture, so we never see them," Maureen remarked one morning.

"Part of it is they've got too much money and they don't have to work,"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Tony said. Later that day, a police car pulsed its siren at us so that three black sedans could sweep by. "Mercedes, of course," Tony said. "You spend too long in places like Tanzania, where all the rich assholes and government officials drive around in their Mercedeses, and you begin to hate that car."

"It's not Mercedes' fault," Maureen said.

"Yes, it is!" Tony said. "They stand for that sort of thing. As a result, I will never own a Mercedes." (The Wheelers own an Audi, a Mini, and a Lotus.)

The day we went to Bilad Sayt, we made our way down the pass afterward and had a late lunch. Then the question was how to get back around the mountains to our hotel in Nizwa. The main road lay to the southeast, but, looking at the map, Tony suggested a more direct route to the northwest. "It's sealed roads, all the way," he said, asserting a faith in the map, and the Sultan's pavers, which proved unfounded eight miles in, when the road became dirt and began to labor up into the mountains. We came to one fork, then another, then a third and a fourth, all unmarked on the map and all lacking signs. The map suggested that we should be aiming at the village of Rumaylah, but the map was ridiculous. "Every road has to lead somewhere," Tony said, sneaking a peek at his global-positioning device and turning toward the setting sun.

"You won't ask for directions," Maureen said.

"No real man does," Tony said. An hour later, we were going ten miles per hour on a road that had narrowed to a sinister goat track, in a canyon that bore no trace of human passage.

"All this is is a lack of information," Tony said. "We should have asked the restaurant owner the best way."

Maureen snorted. "And then you would have said 'Tssh!' and we would have still come this bloody road." They both laughed.

After a few more flying U-turns—the signature Wheeler driving move—we finally emerged from the mountains at dusk, three hours later, twenty-five miles north of where we expected to be. Rumaylah remained a rumor, somewhere behind us. As we turned south for Nizwa, Maureen saw a fort to the west, and, rather in the manner of a mother trying to distract a child from an approaching ice-cream truck, began a flow of chatter about the mountains to the east.

"Should we take a quick look at the fort?" Tony asked. "A drive-by fort?" We had already been to half a dozen of the country's five hundred forts, all somewhat of a piece: the pillowed room for the *wali*, or governor; the dungeons; the machicolations for pouring hot date syrup on invaders. Hearing nothing from the back seat, he continued, "I think there's probably a book on the forts of Oman."

"*We're* not going to publish it," Maureen said.

"No, I meant there probably is one out there."

"Thank God."

"No one's last words were 'I wish I'd done more homework.'"

The young Tony Wheeler once drew painstaking maps of his walks around the neighborhood. It was, perhaps, a way of trying to hold on to an ever-shifting landscape. Wheeler's father was an airport manager for British Overseas Airways Corporation, the precursor to British Airways, and the family kept moving: Pakistan, the Bahamas, Canada, America, England. "Being always the outsider, never spending two whole years in the same school, it does fuck you up," Wheeler told me.

"Tony has a story for every occasion, but he's not very good with personal questions," the photographer Richard I'Anson, who has often travelled with Wheeler, says. "We were in Delhi together in 1997 when he got the news that his father had died. You would possibly expect that he'd talk with his friend about that, but I knew not to ask him about it then, and I wouldn't ask him now."

Wheeler says, "I don't think I was particularly close to either of my parents; there was an English coolness there—though I did love going to the airport with my father. But what the hell—I'm sure Maureen and I fucked up our kids, too." The Wheelers have two children—Tashi, now twenty-four, and Kieran, twenty-two—and they brought them along nearly everywhere; hostels were their nursery schools. "My memories are all messed up from when I was younger," Tashi Wheeler told me, cheerfully. "Sometimes I remember

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a place as Peru, and it was Jakarta. We were always travelling, travelling.”

In retrospect, the growth of Lonely Planet from such rootless soil is both unlikely and entirely apt. The Wheelers came along when the world had begun to tire of the strictly-for-tourists approach of Fodor’s and Frommer’s and Fielding’s, which was packed with alarming puns (the Hotel Piccadilly in London “puts shoppers right in the limey-light”); to tire of the naïveté propounded in books such as “How to Travel Without Being Rich” (1959), which declared, “Mexico is the best place in the world for economical travelers who like to bring back things to astonish their friends . . . woven straw geegaws, works of art in tin and heaven knows what else.”

“In the seventies and eighties, there hadn’t been any new guides out for decades,” Mark Ellingham, who founded the competing Rough Guides in 1981, says. Then airlines deregulated, making cheap tickets widely available, just as Vietnam and China and, later, Eastern Europe were opening up. “We filled a need, but we were young and ignorant and amateurish.”

It was only after Lonely Planet’s India guide unexpectedly sold a hundred thousand copies, in 1980, that the Wheelers realized that their scrappy startup was a real business. But the enterprise remained disarmingly ad hoc; for a time, the “Africa on a Shoestring” book said, of the Comoros Islands, “We haven’t heard of anyone going there for a long time so we have no details to offer. If you do go, please drop us a line.”

“Tony and Maureen would pluck these people out of a bar, or somewhere, and have complete confidence in them,” Michelle de Kretser, a former Lonely Planet publisher who is now a novelist, says. “In 1992, they handed me this plum job, running the new Paris office, which I was totally unqualified for. I said, ‘How do I do that?’ And they said, ‘You know, just go and do it, whatever—you know.’ ” For years, whenever problems arose, Tony would respond rather as the Red Queen did to Alice, saying, “Let’s just run faster!” And for years it all worked.

The Wheelers long maintained an implicit non-aggression pact with other countercultural handbooks. But, as Tony Wheeler tells it, in 1984 he noticed that the Moon Travel Handbook’s renowned Indonesia guide was seriously out of date, so he commissioned a book on that country. After Penguin bought a majority stake in Rough Guides, in 1996, Wheeler noticed that Rough Guides were undercutting Lonely Planet’s prices. “So we thought, How can we hit back?” he told me, with a steely grin. “We targeted their twelve or so top-selling guides and produced competitive titles for every one. They stopped being so aggressive on pricing.”

“Penguin is one of the most ruthless media organizations in the world—it’d be happy to squash us like a bug,” Mark Carnegie, an investment banker who sits on Lonely Planet’s board, says. (“We completely compete with Lonely Planet, but we’re not squashing people,” Andrew Welham, who supervises the Rough Guides and the DK Eyewitness series

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for Penguin, observes.) "But Tony is the Rupert Murdoch of the alternative travel space," Carnegie added. "He knows when and how to squash back."

One afternoon in Tiwi, a pretty town on the coast road to Sur, the Wheelers and I had a very good Indian-food lunch. As we strolled out to the car, a small boy in a blue soccer jersey smiled and asked for "*baisa, baisa*"—money. He was the first beggar we'd met.

"No *baisa*," Maureen said in a friendly way. She showed a real interest in children, and always replied to them. This boy waited till we got in the car and then flipped her the bird. She flipped it back: "Sit and spin, kid!"

"I don't know if you should do that, Maur," Tony said calmly, as he drove off. "If you know what that gesture means, that means Western women know what it means, and that reinforces the idea that they're loose and easy."

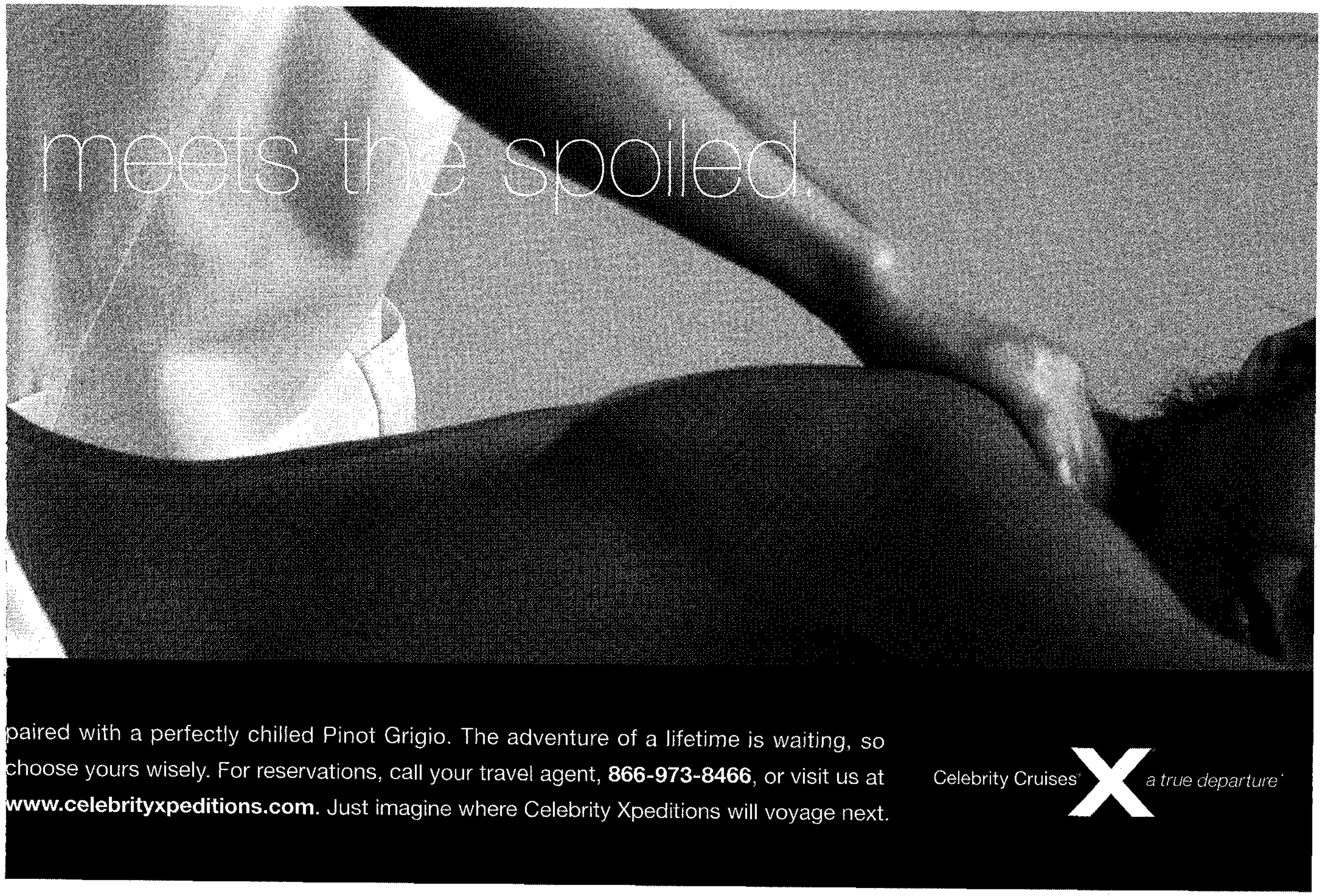
"If I weren't in the car, I'd slap the little bastard," Maureen said. "Would he do that to an Arabic woman? Would he do that to his own mother?"

Thirty years ago, Wheeler took a different view of cross-cultural sexual politics. He wrote, in "Across Asia on the Cheap," that in Muslim countries women are going to "get their little asses grabbed," so "if you can lay hands on one of the bastards, take advantage of it and rough him up a little." In the early days, Lonely Planet advocated what might be called a playground model of behavior: here's the score on Lebanese grass and Balinese mushrooms, here's where to buy carpets in Iran before child-labor laws drive up the price, here's how to sell blood in Kuwait to pay for the rugs. You should avoid unwashed fruit, and you should wear a short-hair wig to fool the uptight cats in Singapore immigration, but, in general, the world is yours.

As the guidebooks grew up, the museum model took hold: foreign cultures are fragile, and should be observed as if through glass; a practice you abhor may simply be a custom you don't understand. In the 1988 edition of the guide to Papua New Guinea, a notoriously lawless place, Wheeler himself wrote, "It is very easy to apply inappropriate Western criteria, and what appears to be uncontrolled anarchy is *often nothing of the sort*. . . . A case that appears to be straightforward assault may well be a community-sanctioned punishment. Looting a store may be in lieu of the traditional division of a big man's estate."

The first edition of Lonely Planet's Japan guide, in 1981, had lengthy treatments of swinging with Japanese couples, live sex shows, and *toruko*, establishments where men could get soaped up to full satisfaction. Over the years, this section was pruned and then eliminated. "When we were selling five thousand Japanese guidebooks a year, who cared what we said?" Maureen told me. "At fifty thousand, you have a different responsibility."

Though sales kept rising, by the late nineties Lonely Planet had begun to fal-



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"I'll work on the appeal. You try to escape."

ter. The company's rapid expansion—in 2000 it published eight new series, including "Watching Wildlife" and "City Maps"—was accompanied by constant cash-flow crises. Sixty per cent of the guides weren't getting to the printer on time. "Everyone was lovely, but no one had a clue," Maureen said, during one stretch of driving. "When Tony was away in 1998—he was travelling a lot, because he didn't want to deal with it—I told the managers they had to go. And I said to Tony, 'If you let them talk you out of it, I am leaving you.' " Tony kept his eyes on the road. Later, Maureen told me, "Without Tony, Lonely Planet wouldn't exist; without me, it wouldn't have held together."

The morning after the planes hit the World Trade Center, in 2001, the company called an emergency meeting, knowing that travel was about to plummet. A hundred people (nineteen per cent of the workforce) were later laid off, and author salaries were reduced by up to thirty per cent. The company was further buffeted by SARS, the terrorist bombing in Bali, the Iraq war, and the threat of avian flu, and it lost money for two and a half years running.

The relaunch, a response to all those changing conditions, subordinated editorializing to giving travellers a well-stuffed factual cushion that they could place between themselves and danger or discomfort. Call it the information model. Tony Wheeler explains, "I would expect someone writing for us about Spain to delve into bullfights, and either to say it's a cruel and primitive spectacle or to say that it's just as great as Hemingway said—and, either way, here are the hours the bullring is open, and do bring sunscreen."

At the same time, "Just go" was replaced, as a corporate ethos, by the words "attitude and authority," which one hears in the Melbourne office every fifteen seconds or so. Equally common are references to the new "consumer segmentation model," which sorts travellers into such categories as "global nomads" and "mature adventurers." And the company that had prided itself on not taking advertisements is about to start a hotel-booking service on its Web site. "When Tony washed up on the deserted shores of Bali thirty years ago, it was great to 'just go,' " John Ryan, Lonely Planet's digital-project manager, says. "If you just went to Bali now, you might not have a place to stay. We're thinking about every phase of the travel cycle—dream, plan, book, go, come back—and trying to fill each one with Lonely Planet content." Like Apple and Starbucks and Ben & Jerry's, all of which began as plucky alternatives, Lonely Planet has become a mainstream brand.

Last year, the company grossed seventy-two million dollars, with a before-tax profit margin of seventeen per cent. But the Wheelers' withdrawal during this tumultuous period has left many authors feeling marooned. Sixteen Lonely Planet veterans have established a private e-mail network to trade yearning recollections of the old days of unfettered travel and unedited prose, of princely royalties and heavy drinking and broken marriages. "Now authors are data collectors for editors," the author Joe Cummings told me. The veterans gripe that the editors don't even return their e-mails, a state of affairs they call "black hole syndrome."

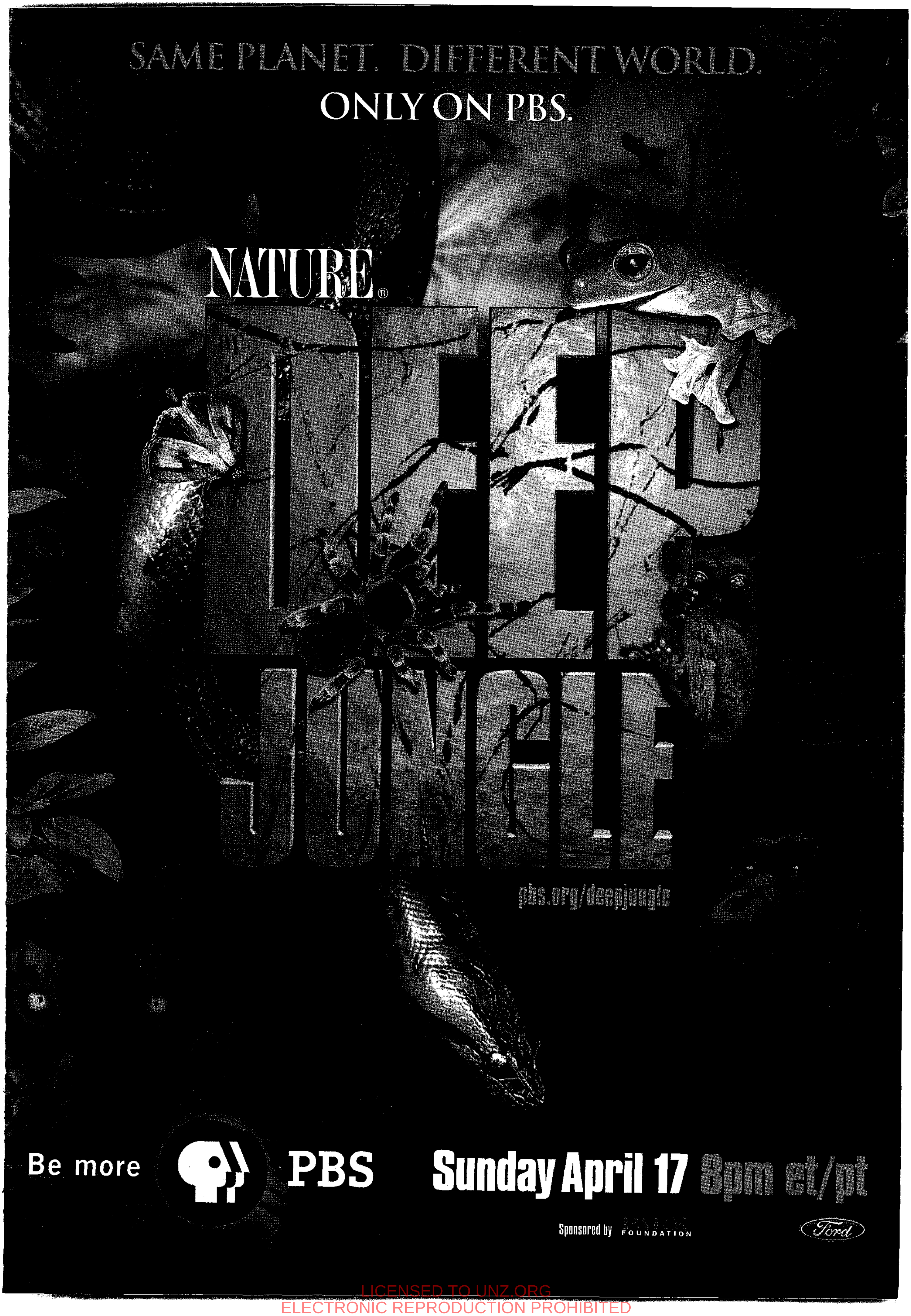
For their part, the Wheelers speak of "mad-author syndrome." But they are equally skeptical of the company's new marketing surveys and slogans: clearly, Maureen is attitude and Tony is authority. One night over dinner at a Melbourne restaurant, Maureen said, "I used to feel that Lonely Planet was very *real*—we'd steam stamps off letters and reuse them, and everyone who worked there became our friends. And then we hired all these people—"

"These lawyers and accountants," Tony said. "I hate paying them. I walk through our parking garage and see a Mercedes—a Mercedes!"

"Anyway," Maureen said, "the point is, we're learning how to be people who just *inspire*—but Lonely Planet doesn't feel real to me anymore."

One measure of how the company has changed is that when the new head of trade publishing, Roz Hopkins, took the job, in 2002, she quickly, if regretfully, cancelled Wheeler's forthcoming book about his travels in rice-growing countries. "That sort of book had been quite a dismal failure," she told me, referring to other idiosyncratic Wheeler efforts featuring Richard I'Anson photographs. "They don't articulate the message of the brand." So Wheeler wound up underwriting "Rice Trails" with nearly forty thousand dollars of his own money—effectively using Lonely Planet as a vanity press.

The Wheelers often hear complaints that they have helped to ruin certain destinations—that, as Richard Bangs, of Mountain Travel Sobek, affectionately puts it, "Tony can turn an out-of-the-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way secret place like Lombok into something that's loved to death." They respond that change is inevitable, that guidebooks don't inspire travel so much as channel it, and that it's better to have educated travellers than clucks on tour buses. But the way Tony Wheeler rushes about suggests that he feels with particular keenness the age-old traveller's anxiety about getting there before it all goes. (As early as the eighteen-seventies, John Muir denounced the tourists who were ruining Yosemite as "scum.") Wheeler's fears were realized at one of Oman's signature seasonal riverbeds, Wadi Bani Khalid. As we approached the wadi, deep in the mountains, the road became a rugged dirt track and Wheeler brightened; arduousness, for him, promises happiness. Then we rounded a bend and joined a new road swarming with construction workers. He sank back as if he'd been punched: "It's appalling!"

"The Sultan is always thinking of the benefit of his people," Maureen murmured.

After we parked, five local boys shepherded us up to the rock pools, chattering away in the universal pidgin of the tourism encounter: "Where you from? What your name? First time come Oman?" The pools were a refreshing aquamarine, but they were also clotted with trash. The boys asked us to come for a Bedouin meal, and, when we declined, one boy suggested, "Give me money—one *rial*." Taking our refusal slightly sulkily, they turned back toward the parking lot.

"They'll be proper little guides soon," Maureen said. She considered the concrete picnic areas and the beginnings of what looked like a snack stand—a grader was noisily levelling the earth nearby—and said, "You have to destroy everything in order to appreciate what you have. They'll learn that people are paying more to get away from all this."

We were soon back on the road, heading north. "You grow up, and then you grow old," Maureen said suddenly. "The first part is all right . . ."

The modern version of straw geegaws is cultural capital in the form of stories and photographs. "Tony and Maureen are in the travel-information insurance business," Mark Carnegie says. "If the educated consumer is spending ten thousand dollars on a vacation, and someone says to him, 'For an extra thirty dollars, I will give you a sunrise that will make you cry'—well, he's going to take out that insurance."

Even Lonely Planet, however, hasn't figured out a way to market its epiphanies other than by using the impoverished language of travel writing. And so "palm-fringed beaches" and "lush rain forests" and other "sleepy backwaters" are invariably counterposed against "teeming cities" with their "bustling souks." Every region has a "colorful history" and a "rich cultural tapestry." And every place on earth is a "land of contrasts." As the Arabian Peninsula guide observes, "Bedouin tribesmen park 4WDs alongside goat hair tents; veiled women chat on mobile phones while awaiting laser hair removal," and so on.

Peering through the windshield as another unnamed village ghosted by—mud-brick houses, men in white slouched in the shade—Maureen said, "We're outsiders, we don't speak the language, we only glean what we can through what we read. I can *see* their lives, but I'd love to be in their heads for a few hours—what's it like to *be* their lives?"

Entranced by every sort of strangeness, Tony often wondered aloud: What are these "pee caps" that hotel bars forbid you to wear? Why are there so many "Gents Tailors" in the town of Sohar? But he never stopped, preferring to note the street misnamed on Lonely Planet's Sohar map, and the absence of the promised *biryani* joints. He wants to discover by observation or exploration, but not to have to ask, a form of cheating. When I was younger, I might have inquired more myself—there was a time when every new thing, even durian slushies, seemed worth investigating. But now, I realized, I had been perfectly content to follow Wheeler's lead, and so I was leaving Oman with a thoroughly researched yet tentative impression of a country of forts, wadis, and a pleasant capital, Muscat.

I asked Wheeler what he thought Lonely Planet should do about Oman. He suggested that a small, high-priced book that focussed on the forts, the wadis, and Muscat might work—but in truth he seemed to be already looking ahead to his next destination, Ethiopia, and then to all the trips beyond.

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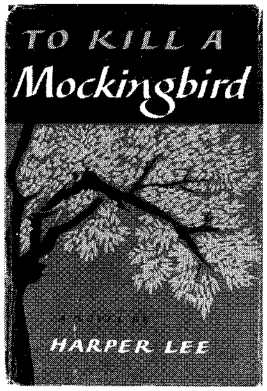

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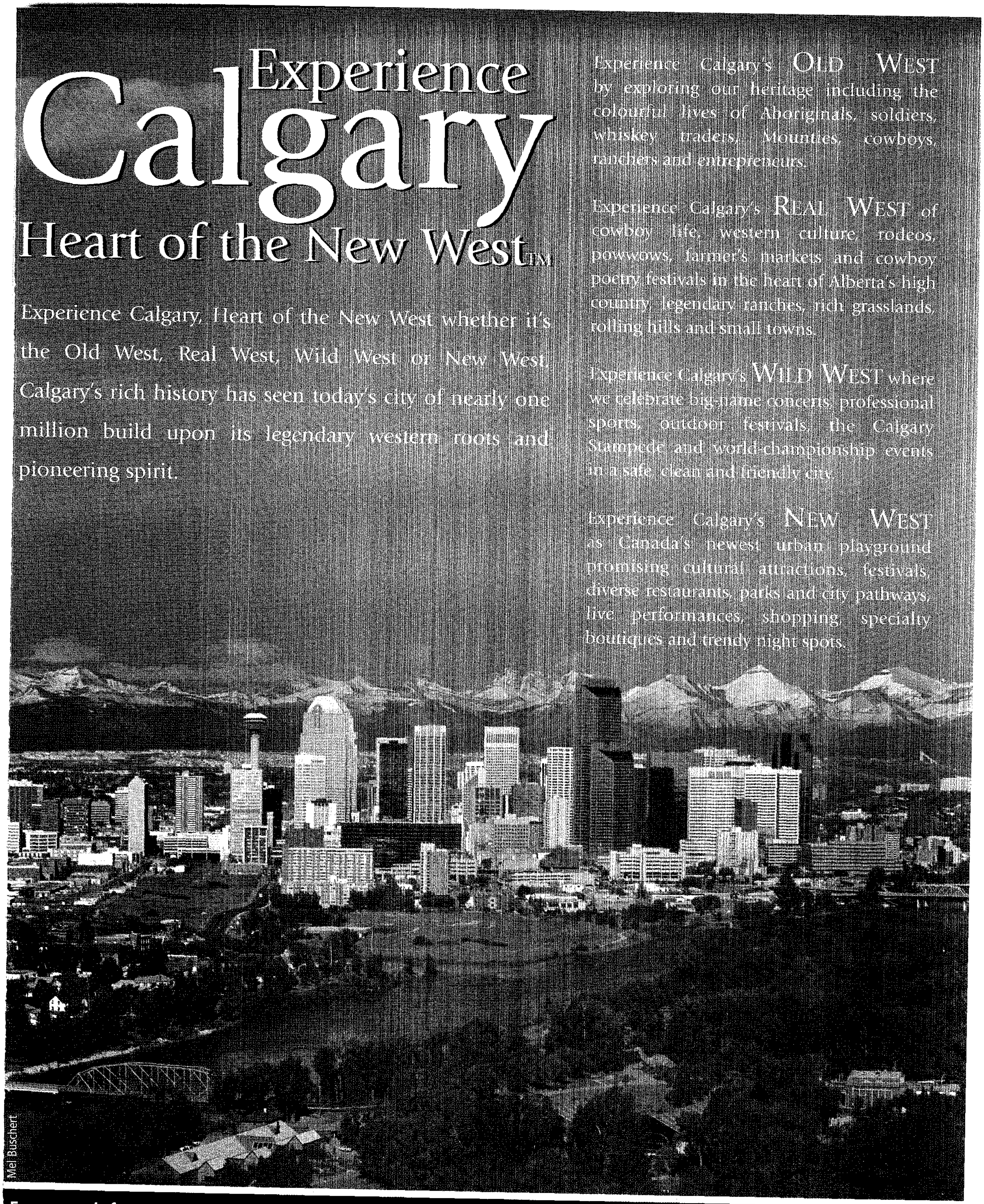

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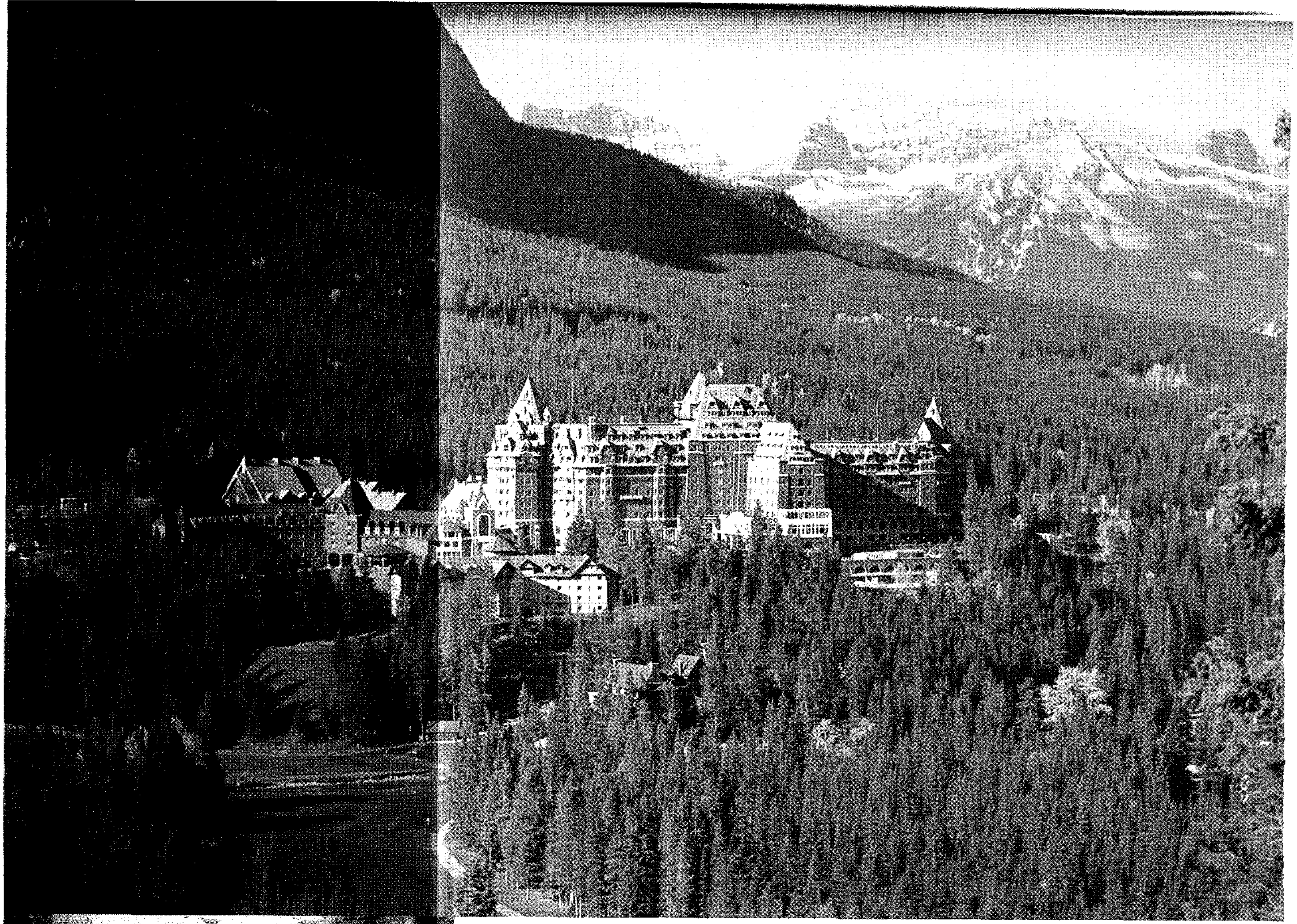

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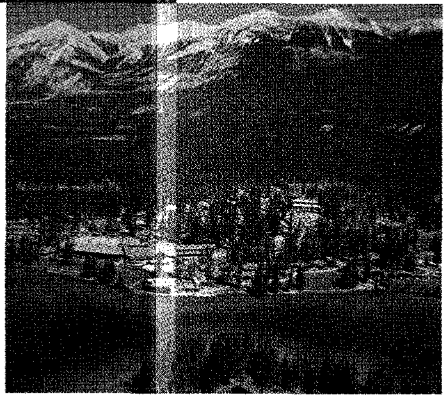

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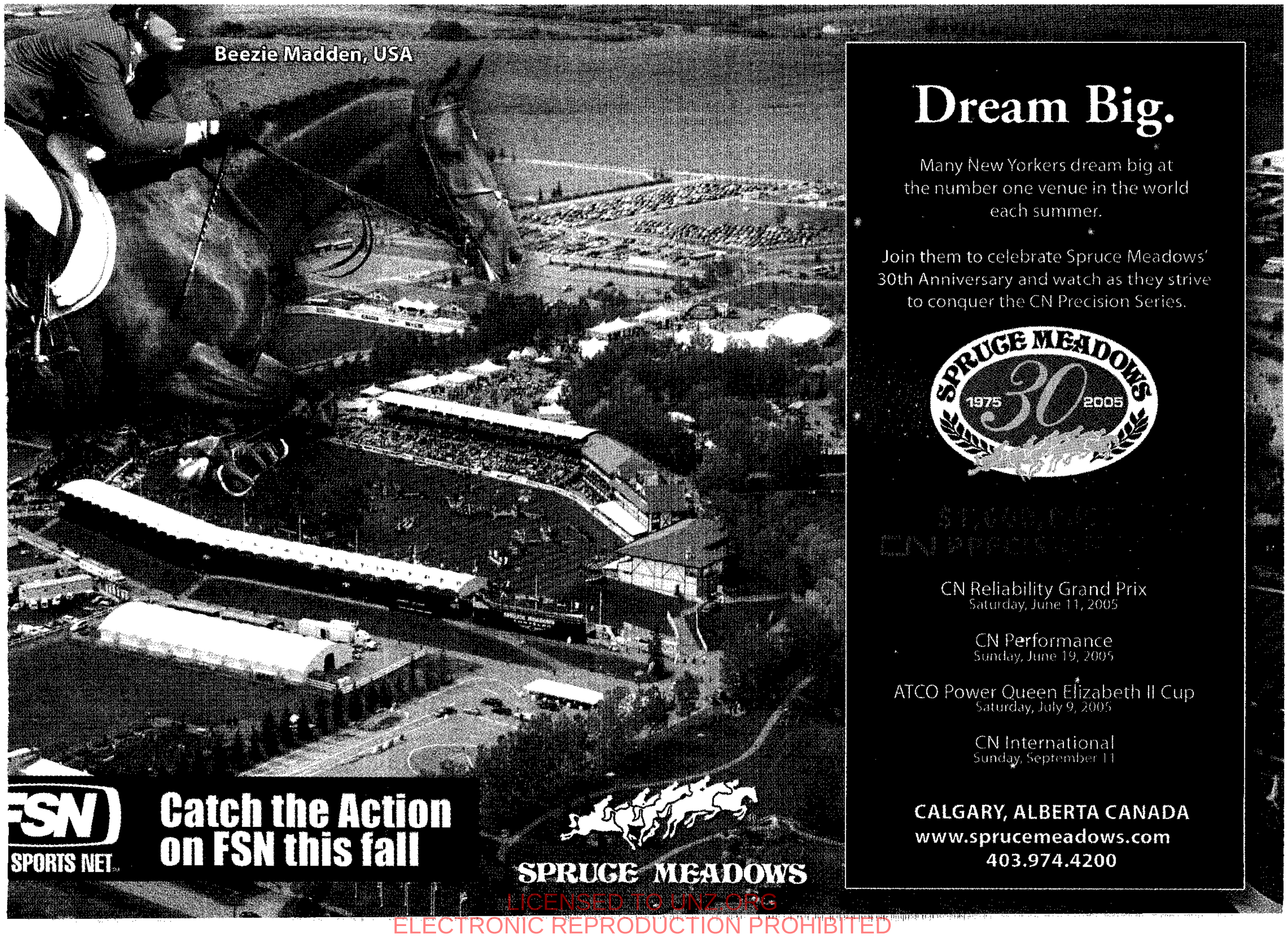

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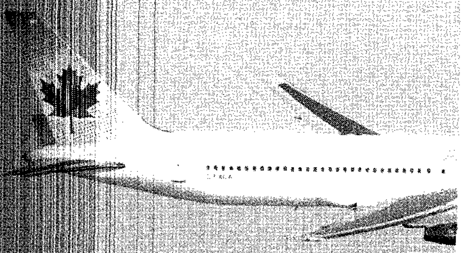

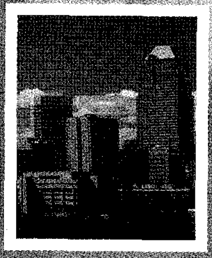

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"In the early days," he said, "doing the third or fourth edition of 'South-East Asia on a Shoestring,' I remember feeling like we were trapped: We set this up to travel, and all we're doing is going to Singapore and Bangkok over and over, updating. "

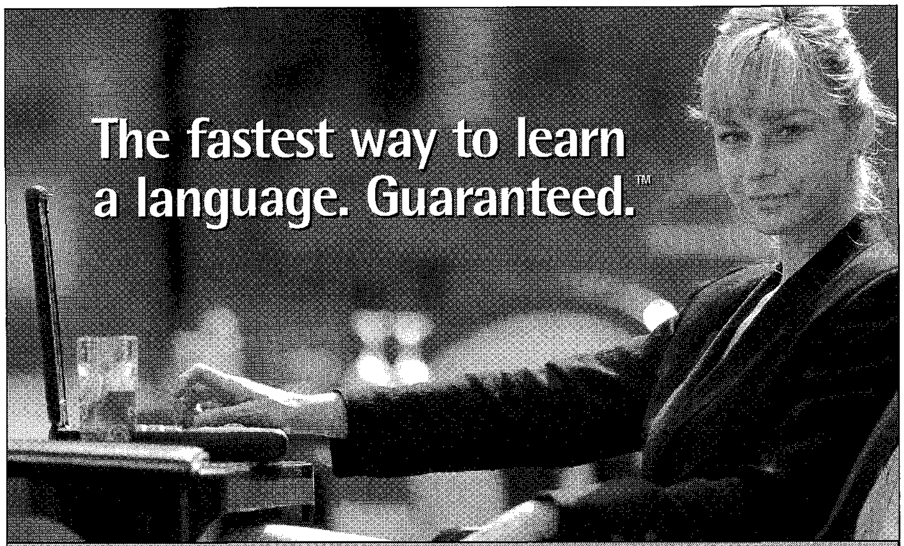
"Now that the company is launched, Tony can really travel," Maureen said.

Tony thought that over, its possible meanings, and replied, "In many ways, I don't think we've travelled a lot, because we've had the business distracting us. It got in the way."

Late one afternoon, we hiked up Wadi Shab, a steep canyon. The first hour was an easy hike, and then it became a scramble over shaley outcroppings and around acacia thorns. Finally, as the canyon filled with shadows, we arrived at a crisp blue pool where a few local teen-agers were splashing about and diving into the adjacent underground caves. The last rays of sun lit the spot: a perfect reward after a long drive and a healthy walk. But Tony shifted with frustration as Maureen and I sat on a boulder and turned our faces to the sun. He had noticed three tourists in bathing suits above us on the faint indications of a trail. "I'll just go on for twenty more minutes," Tony said. We got up and walked with him a ways, and then Maureen took up a perch against the canyon wall. "I'm not going on," she said. "I'll stay here." I was thinking about nightfall, and finding the path down, and the two-hour drive along the sea cliffs to the hotel.

"Well, I'm just going on for a bit," he said. Having, across the years, thrown off most of his burdens, Tony No. 1 now adjusted the one piece of baggage that remained—his backpack, which was ringed with sweat—and strode on as Tony No. 2. Or was it the reverse? In a few moments, he was around the corner.

"The trick with Tony is, if I'd been in that comfortable place by the pool he would have gone on and on," Maureen said. "But, knowing I'm in this uncomfortable place, he'll feel guilty and come back sooner. He has to go around that bend, though—it's his obsession. He has to go farther than the tourists. And, if there's someone else around that bend, he'll keep going until he's past them, until he's the farthest out." ♦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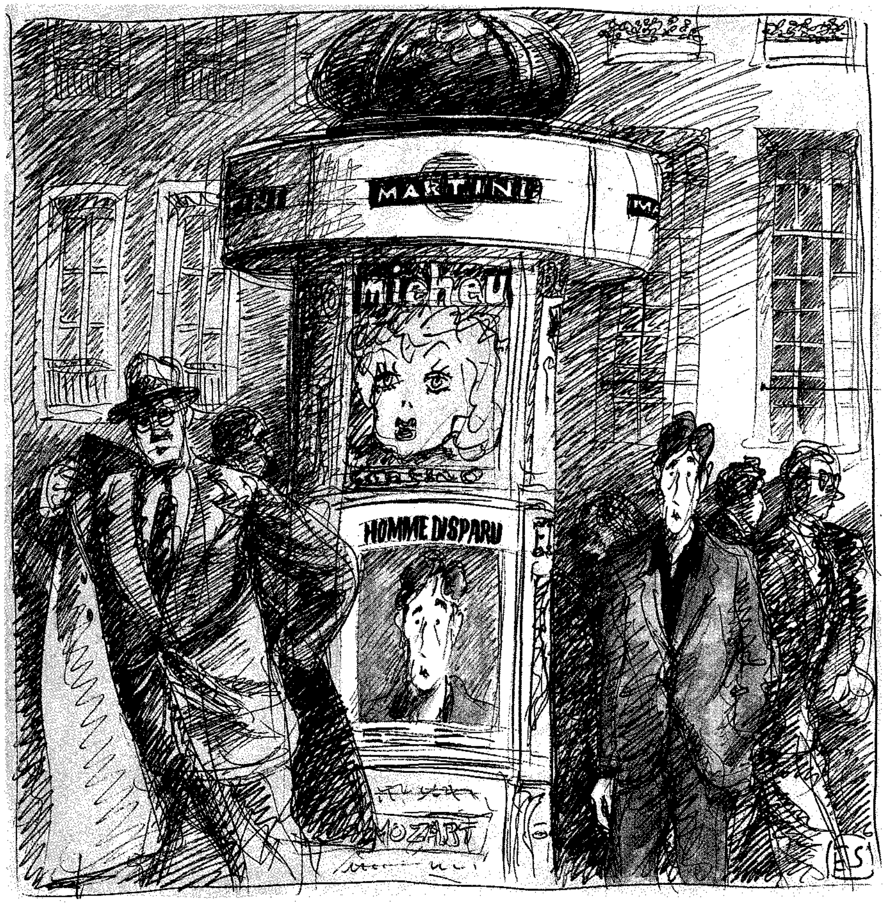

Hugh always manages to blend in among the locals—an uncanny talent.

My street in Paris is named for a surgeon who taught at the nearby medical school and discovered an abnormal skin condition, a contracture that causes the fingers to bend inward, eventually turning the hand into a full-time fist. It's short, Rue Dupuytren, no more or less attractive than anything else in the area, yet vacationing Americans are drawn here, compelled for some reason to stand under my office window and scream at each other.

For some, the arguments are about language. A wife had made certain claims regarding her abilities. "I've been listening to tapes," she said, or, perhaps, "All those romance languages are pretty much alike, so what with my Spanish we should be fine." But then people use slang, or ask unexpected questions, and things begin to fall apart: "*You're* the one who claimed to speak French." I hear this all the time, and look out my window to see a couple standing toe to toe on the sidewalk.

"Yeah," the woman will say. "At least I *try*."

"Well, try *harder*, damn it. Nobody knows what the hell you're saying."

Geographical arguments are the second most common. People notice that they've been on my street before, maybe half an hour ago, when they only thought they were tired and hungry and needed to find a bathroom.

"For God's sake, Philip, would it kill you to just ask somebody?"

I lie on my couch thinking, Why don't *you* ask? How come *Philip* has to do it? But these things are often more complicated than they appear. Maybe Philip was here twenty years ago, and has been claiming to know his way around. Maybe he's one of those who refuse to hand over the map, or refuse to pull it out, lest he look like a tourist.

The desire to pass is loaded territory, and can lead to the ugliest sort of argument. "You want to *be* French, Mary Frances, that's your problem, but you're just another American." I went to the window for that one, and saw a marriage disintegrate before my eyes. Poor Mary Frances in her beige beret. Back at the hotel it had probably seemed like a good idea, but now it was ruined and ridiculous, a cheap felt pancake sliding off the back of her head. She'd done the little scarf thing, too, not caring that it was summer. It could have been worse, I thought. She could have been wearing one of those striped boater's shirts, but, as it was, it was pretty bad, a costume, really.

Some vacationers raise the roof—they don't care who hears them—but Mary Frances spoke in a whisper. This, too, was seen as pretension, and made her husband even angrier. "Americans," he repeated. "We don't live in France, we live in Virginia. Vienna, Virginia. Got it?"

I looked at this guy and knew for certain that if we'd met at a party he'd claim to live in Washington, D.C. Ask for a street address, and he'd look away, mumbling, "Well, just outside D.C."

When fighting at home, an injured party can retreat to a separate part of the house, or step into the back yard to shoot at cans, but outside my window the options are limited to crying, sulking, or storming back to the hotel. "Oh, for Christ's sake," I hear. "Can we please just try to have a good time?" This is like ordering someone to find you attractive, and it doesn't work. I've tried it.

Most of Hugh's and my travel arguments have to do with pace. I'm a fast walker, but he has longer legs, and likes to maintain a good twenty-foot lead. To the casual observer, he would appear to be running from me, darting around corners, intentionally trying to lose himself. When asked about my latest vacation, the answer is always the same. In Bangkok, in Ljubljana, in Budapest, and Bonn: What did I see? Hugh's back, just briefly, as he disappeared into a crowd. I'm convinced that before we go anywhere he

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What Would
Gandhi Do?

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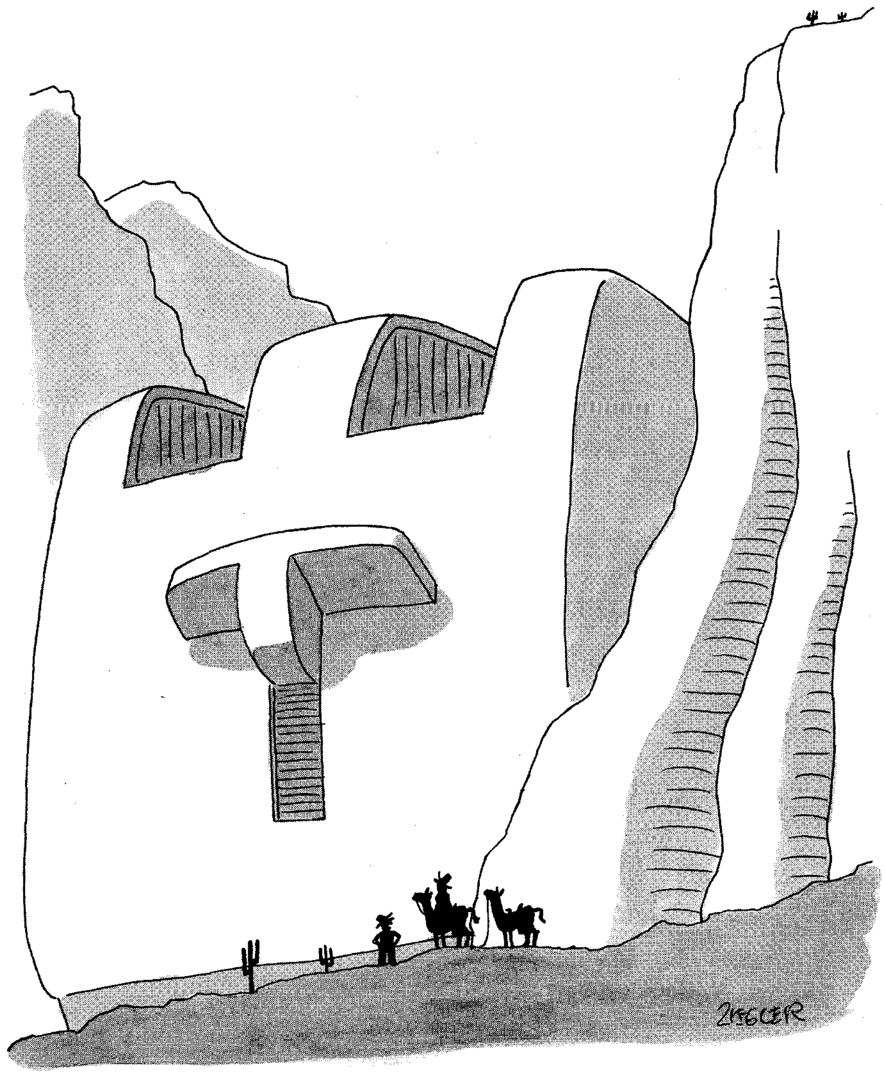
calls the authorities, and asks what style and color of coat is the most popular among the locals. If they say, for example, a navy windbreaker, he'll go with that. It's uncanny the way he blends in. When we're in an Asian country, I swear he actually makes himself shorter. I don't know how, but he does. There's a store in London that sells travel guides alongside novels set in this or that given country. The idea is that you'll read the guide for facts, and read the novel for atmosphere—a nice thought, but the only book I'll ever need is "Where's Waldo?" All my energy goes into keeping track of Hugh, and as a result I don't get to enjoy anything.

The last time this happened we were in Australia, where I'd gone to attend a conference. Hugh had all the free time in the world, but mine was limited to four hours on a Saturday morning. There's a lot to do in Sydney, but first on my list was a visit to the Taronga Zoo, where I hoped to see a dingo. I never saw that Meryl Streep movie, and as a result the creature was a complete mystery to me. Were someone to say, "I left my window open and a dingo flew in," I would have believed it, and if they said, "Dingoes, our pond is completely overrun with them," I would have believed that as well. Two-legged, four-legged, finned, or feathered: I simply had no idea, which was exciting, actually—a rare treat in the age of twenty-four-hour nature channels. Hugh offered to draw me a picture, but, having come this far, I wanted to extend my ignorance just a little bit longer, to stand in front of the cage or tank and see this thing for myself. It would be a glorious occasion, and I didn't want to spoil it at the eleventh hour. I also didn't want to go alone, and this was where our problem started.



"At long last, Wyatt, our dream has come true, and we are within reach of the legendary toast fields of the Sierra Madre."

Hugh had spent most of his week swimming, and had dark circles beneath his eyes, twin impressions left by his goggles. When he's at the ocean, he goes out for hours, passing the lifeguard buoys, and moving into international waters. It looks as though he's trying to swim home, which is embarrassing when you're the one left onshore with your hosts. "He honestly does like it here," I say. "Really."

Had it been raining, he might have willingly joined me, but, as it was, Hugh had no interest in dingoes. It took a solid hour of whining to change his mind, but even then his heart wasn't in it. Anyone could see that. We took a ferry to the zoo, and while we were on board he stared longingly at the water and made little paddling motions with his hands. Every second wound him tighter, and when we landed I literally had to run to keep up with him. The koala bears were just a blur, as were the visitors who stood before them, posing for photos. "Can't we just . . . ," I wheezed, but Hugh was rounding the emus and couldn't hear me.

He has the most extraordinary sense of direction I've ever seen in a mammal. Even in Venice, where the streets were seemingly designed by ants, he left the train station, looked once at a map, and led us straight to our hotel. An hour after checking in he was giving directions to strangers, and by the time we left he was suggesting shortcuts to gondoliers. Maybe he smelled the dingoes. Maybe he'd seen their pen from the window of the plane, but, whatever his secret, he ran right to them. I caught up a minute later and bent from the waist to hyperventilate. Then I covered my face, stood upright, and slowly parted my fingers, seeing first a fence, and then, behind it, a shallow moat filled with water. I saw some trees—and a tail—and then I couldn't stand it anymore and dropped my hands to my sides.

"Why, they look just like dogs," I said. "Are you sure we're in the right place?"

Nobody answered, and I turned to find myself standing beside an embarrassed Japanese woman. "I'm sorry," I said. "I thought you were the person I brought halfway around the world. First class."

A zoo is a good place to make a spectacle of yourself, as the people around you have creepier, more photogenic things to look at. A gorilla plea-

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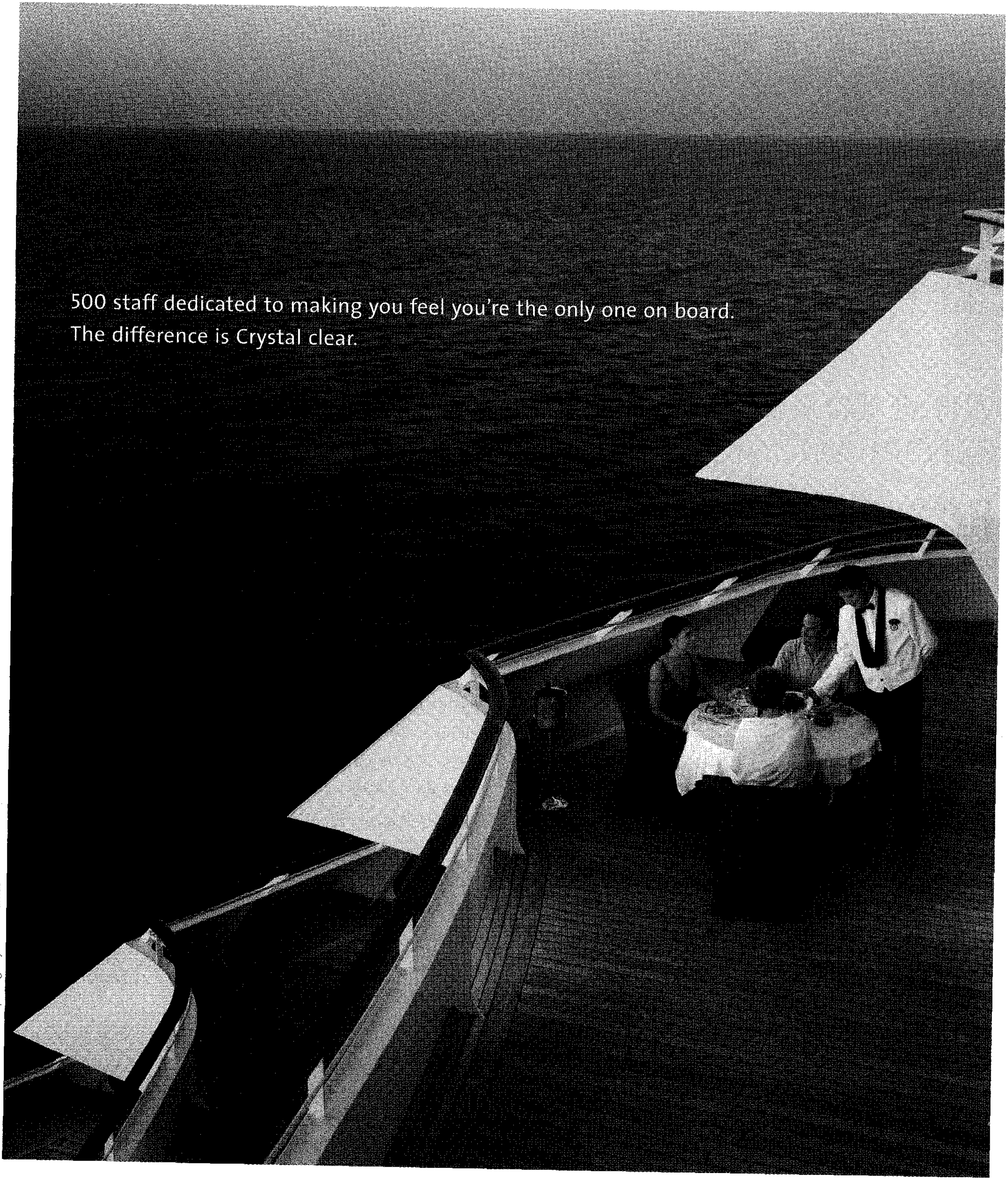
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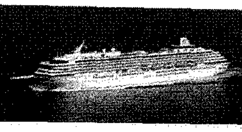
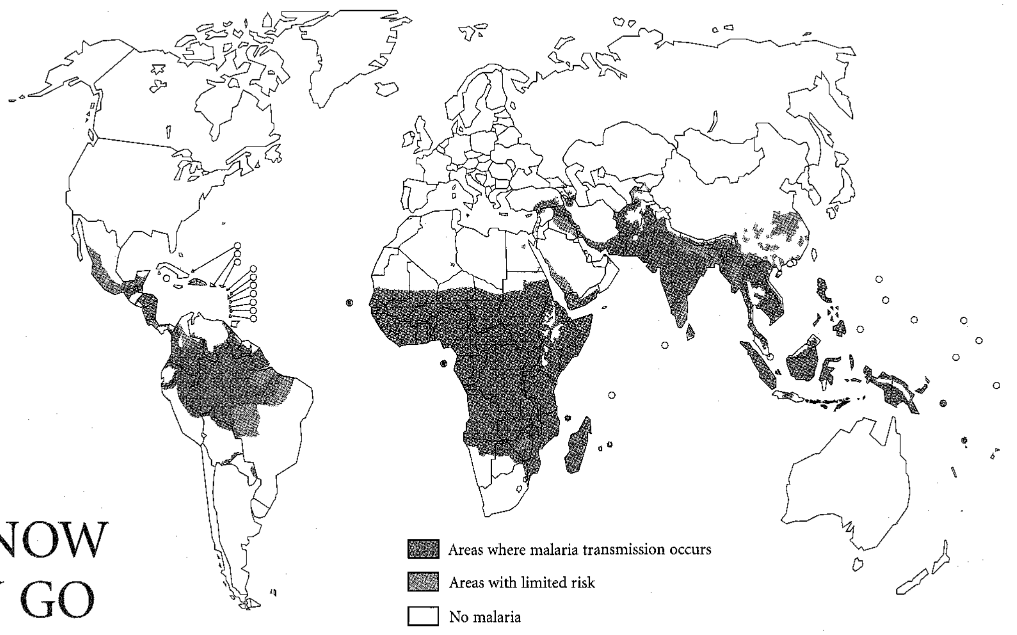


CRYSTAL CRUISES

[Explore] *Malarone*


▩ Areas where malaria transmission occurs
▨ Areas with limited risk
☐ No malaria

THIS MAP IS A VISUAL AID ONLY, IT IS NOT A DEFINITIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MALARIA ENDEMICITY. SOURCE: ©WHO, 2004

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

For many intrepid travelers, the lure of exotic locales like the ancient ruins of Central America, palaces of India, or savannahs of Africa beckons. But it is advised that about a month before embarking on an adventure of a lifetime, vacationers should enlist the help of a travel doctor to find out what precautions are needed to keep them safe.

Experts say malaria may be more prevalent than previously thought. A March 10th study published in the science journal *Nature* suggests that the number of reported cases is as much as fifty per cent higher than World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, and attributes the difference to weaknesses in reporting the disease.

The good news is that most people can travel in malaria-stricken areas without incident, as long as they follow some basic preventative measures. The first step is to determine if an anti-malarial drug is needed and if so, which one is best suited for a particular area. For example, chloroquine is the first choice for Mexico, most of Central America, and Argentina, but not in vast chloroquine-resistant areas of Brazil, China, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine in these regions.

For a complete guide on health-related travel issues throughout the world, a new edition of the CDC's "Yellow Book" ($25) will be released next month.

"The CDC is really the gold standard for keeping up to date," says Dr. Richard F. Thompson, director of the Camino Medical Group International Travel Clinic in Sunnyvale, California, who recommends his patients review malaria risk information by region and country on the CDC's Traveler's Health Web site.

Because no drug is completely effective in preventing malaria, the CDC urges travelers to wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and hats to avoid mosquito bites, and to apply insect repellent with DEET to exposed skin. The Anopheles mosquito is active most often at night, so travelers who are sleeping in rooms without air-conditioning or screens are advised to drape their beds in mosquito netting sprayed with an insecticide like permethrin, available at camping stores.

Many countries have seasonal periods of lower malaria risk, when colder temperatures and lower humidity make it more difficult for mosquitoes to thrive. But even where malaria transmission wanes a few months a year, any risk at all means patients should adhere to the year-round prevention procedures, says Dr. Linnie Golightly, a physician at New York Weill Cornell Medical Center's International Health Care Service. "It's a basic tenet of American healthcare that one preventable death is one too many," she says.

But infectious disease concerns don't have to significantly alter overseas travel plans, says Thompson. "You simply have to think ahead," Thompson says. "And when in doubt, take your medication and use DEET."

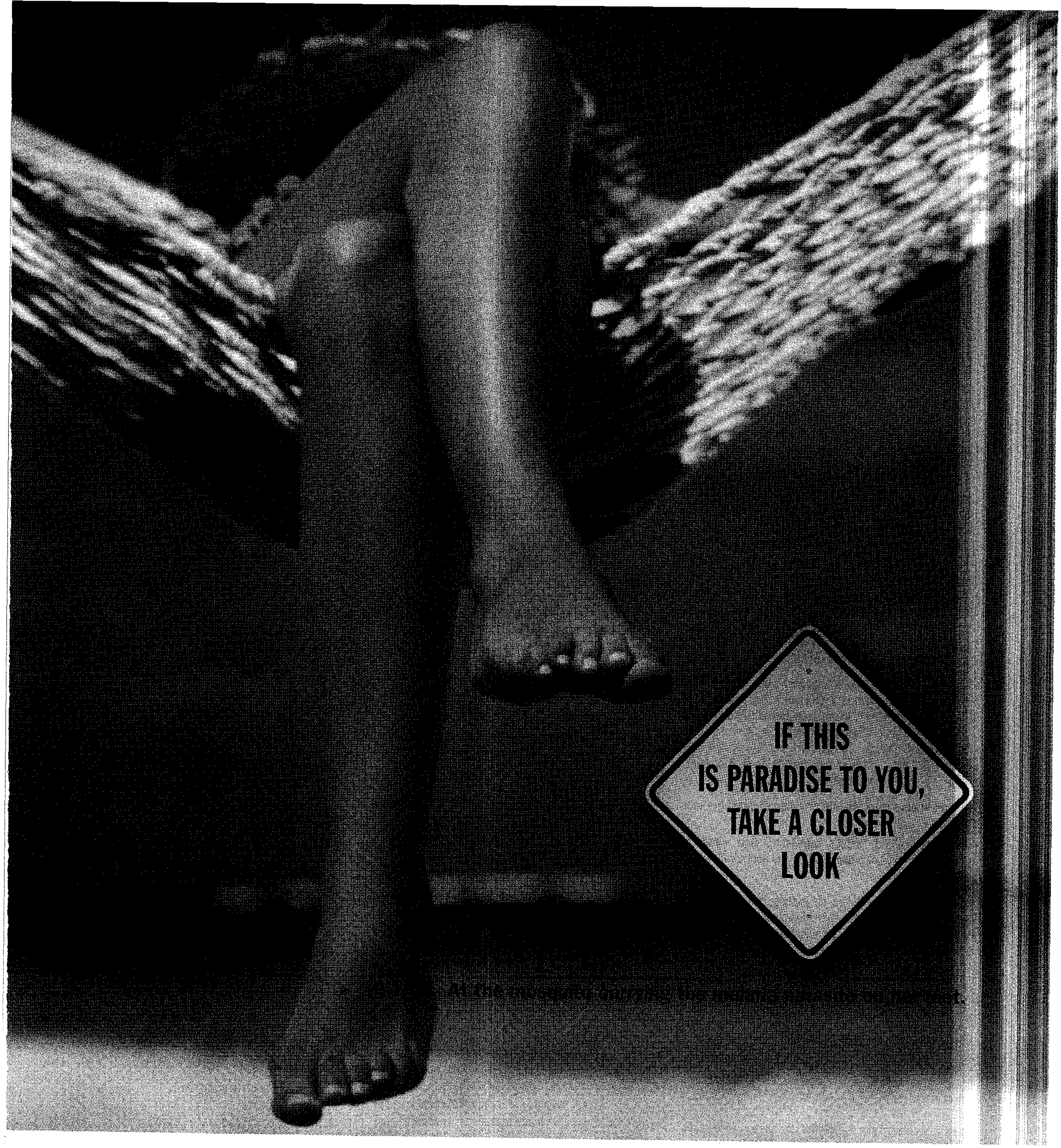
(continued)

RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

- *CDC Traveler's Health* www.cdc.gov/travel/
- *World Health Organization* www.who.int/tdr/diseases/malaria/diseaseinfo.htm
- www.wellontheroad.com/illnesses/malaria.html

TRAVEL CLINIC DIRECTORIES

- *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* www.astmh.org/scripts/clinindex.asp
- *International Society of Travel Medicine* www.istm.org


IF THIS
IS PARADISE TO YOU,
TAKE A CLOSER
LOOK
At the mosquito carrying the malaria parasite on her foot.

Each year, more than 125 million international travelers visit countries where malaria is present. Are you protected? Be smart, take MALARONE. MALARONE is 98% effective in the prevention of the most common and deadly form of malaria (*Plasmodium falciparum*) and generally well tolerated.* No wonder MALARONE is now the #1 prescribed antimalarial product in the U.S. Ask your doctor if MALARONE is right for you. For more information, and to download a $20 rebate for MALARONE, visit **Travelsafely.com.**

Travel Smart

tablets
MALARONE®
atovaquone and proguanil HCl

For the prevention of malaria: *The most common side effects in adults included headache and abdominal pain, and additionally vomiting in children. You should not take MALARONE if you have severe kidney disease or are allergic to MALARONE or any of its components. Rare cases of anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction) in treatment with MALARONE have been reported.

Please see important information on the following page.

Patient Information – Rx only

MALARONE® (MAL-a-rone)

atovaquone and proguanil hydrochloride for Prevention of Malaria

This Patient Information leaflet is intended only for children and adult travelers taking MALARONE for prevention of malaria. The information for treatment of acute malaria may be different from the information for prevention of malaria. Read this information carefully before you or your child starts taking MALARONE and read the information you receive each time you receive more MALARONE. There may be new information.

- This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor or other healthcare professional about preventing malaria for you or your child. Only your doctor can determine if MALARONE is right for you. If you have any questions about MALARONE, ask your doctor.
- Before your trip, be sure to ask your doctor about which antimalarial drug(s) are the right ones for you and your family. MALARONE is a prescription drug and must be taken before travel, during your stay, and after your return.

What is MALARONE and what is it used for?

MALARONE is a drug given to children and adults to prevent *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria. Malaria is a serious, sometimes fatal, disease caused by a parasite. Humans get malaria from the bite of a female mosquito carrying the malaria parasite. Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice (yellow coloring of the skin and eyes) because of the loss of red blood cells. If not promptly treated, malaria may cause kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma, and death.

MALARONE combines two antimalarial drugs, atovaquone and proguanil hydrochloride, in one tablet. These medicines work together to help kill the malaria parasite. Antimalarial drug(s) are an important way to protect against malaria. However, antimalarial drug(s) are not always 100% effective. So, other ways should also be used to prevent mosquito and other insect bites.

What additional steps should be taken to avoid getting malaria?

Protective clothing, insect repellents, and bednets are important ways of protecting you and your family from getting malaria.

- Use DEET insect repellent on exposed skin and flying insect spray in the room where you sleep.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, especially from dusk to dawn. This is the time when mosquitoes carrying the malaria parasite are most active.
- Sleep under a mosquito bednet that has been dipped in permethrin insecticide if you are not living in screened or air-conditioned housing.

Who should not take MALARONE?

Before taking MALARONE, you must tell your doctor if:

- your child weighs less than 25 pounds. MALARONE should not be used in children who weigh less than 25 pounds.
- you or your child previously had any allergic reaction to MALARONE or any ingredient contained in this tablet (see *What are the ingredients in MALARONE?*). During clinical trials, rare cases of anaphylaxis following treatment with atovaquone/proguanil have been reported.
- you or your child has kidney problems.

Can MALARONE be used in nursing or pregnant women?

If you get malaria during your pregnancy, you may become more ill than if you got malaria while not being pregnant. In addition, malaria can be a major risk to your pregnancy, and can cause premature birth, miscarriage, and stillbirth. In pregnant women who must travel to an area where malaria is common, personal protection against mosquito bites should always be employed (see *What additional steps should be taken to avoid getting malaria?*). Pregnant women should talk to their doctors about the risks and benefits of travel to an area where malaria is common.

While there are no clinical studies of MALARONE in pregnant women, MALARONE may be used if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the unborn child. Some of the active ingredients in MALARONE may be passed into breast milk in small quantities. Only a doctor can determine if MALARONE is right for nursing and pregnant women.

How should you or your child take MALARONE?

- The daily dose should be taken at the same time each day with food or a milky drink.
- If vomiting occurs within 1 hour after a dose, a repeat dose should be taken.
- MALARONE should be started 1 or 2 days before entering an area where malaria is common and every day during the stay and for 7 days after return.
- Adults should take one MALARONE Tablet (adult strength = 250 mg of atovaquone and 100 mg of proguanil hydrochloride) per day. Your doctor will determine the correct dosage that your child should take to prevent malaria.
- If a dose is missed, take a dose as soon as possible and then return to the normal dosing schedule. However, if a dose is skipped, do not double the next dose. Talk with a doctor regarding other ways to prevent malaria if you or your child stops taking MALARONE for any reason.
- If you or your child gets sick with a fever during or after your return from an area where malaria is common, seek medical attention and tell a doctor that you or your child may have been exposed to malaria. Antimalarial drug(s) are not always 100% effective.
- While taking MALARONE tell your doctor if you start to take other medicines or change how you take a medicine. MALARONE may affect how well other drugs work, and some drugs may affect how well MALARONE works.

What are the possible side effects of MALARONE?

For the prevention of malaria: The most common side effects in adults included headache and abdominal pain, and additionally vomiting in children. You should not take MALARONE if you have severe kidney disease or are allergic to MALARONE or any of its components. Rare cases of anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction) in treatment with MALARONE have been reported.

What are the ingredients in MALARONE?

Each adult MALARONE Tablet contains 250 mg of atovaquone and 100 mg of proguanil hydrochloride and each MALARONE Pediatric Tablet contains 62.5 mg of atovaquone and 25 mg of proguanil hydrochloride. The inactive ingredients in both tablets are hydroxypropyl cellulose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, poloxamer 188, povidone K30, and sodium starch glycolate. The tablet coating contains hypromellose, polyethylene glycol 400, polyethylene glycol 8000, red iron oxide, and titanium dioxide.

General advice about prescription medicines

This leaflet summarizes important information about MALARONE. If you have questions or problems, talk with your doctor or other healthcare provider. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about MALARONE that is written for healthcare professionals. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a patient information leaflet. Do not use MALARONE for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not share your medicine with other people.

gsk GlaxoSmithKline

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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
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RISK BY REGION

Africa

Most countries south of the Saharan desert are chloroquine-resistant and are a high risk for the most dangerous strain of malaria, P.falciparum. Malaria exists in Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco, but anti-malarial drugs are not needed.

Asia

Japan, Taiwan, and Mongolia have no danger of malaria. Chloroquine is recommended for travelers to North and South Korea. Most of China is a fertile ground for the parasite; the Hainan and Yunnan provinces are chloroquine-resistant, but chloroquine is effective in the rest of the country.

Eastern Europe

Some areas of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan present a malaria risk and are chloroquine-sensitive.

Mexico and Central America

Mexico carries no danger of malaria in many coastal resorts. Chloroquine is recommended for travel in much of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica. Conditions in Panama vary widely.

Middle East

Chloroquine is advised for trips to Iraq, Syria, and Turkey; chloroquine-resistant strains of malaria are present in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

South America

Much of the continent's tropical region is chloroquine-resistant, except for Paraguay, which is sensitive to the drug. Chile, the Falkland Islands, and Uruguay are risk-free. Argentina has some areas of risk that respond to chloroquine.

South and Southeast Asia

Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines have drug-resistant strains.

South Pacific

There is no malaria risk in Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand, but Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and all of Vanuatu are high-risk and chloroquine-resistant.

(Note: Atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, and mefloquine are prescribed in all chloroquine-resistant areas except for sections along the Thai-Myanmar and Thai-Cambodian borders, which are mefloquine-resistant.)

sures himself while eating a head of iceberg lettuce, and it's much more entertaining than the middle-aged man who dashes around talking to himself. For me, that talk is always the same: a rehearsal of my farewell speech “. . . because this time, buddy, it's over. I mean it.” I imagine myself packing a suitcase, throwing stuff in without bothering to fold it. “If you find yourself missing me, you might want to get a dog, an old, fat one that can run to catch up, and make that distant panting sound you've grown so accustomed to. Me, though, I'm finished.”

I will walk out the door and never look back, never return his calls, never even open his letters. The pots and pans, all the things that we acquired together, he can have them, that's how unfeeling I will be. “Clean start,” that's my motto, so what do I need with a shoebox full of photographs, or the tan-colored belt he gave me for my thirty-third birthday, back when we first met and he did not yet understand that a belt is something you get from your aunt, and not from your boyfriend, I don't care who made it. After that, though, he got pretty good in the gift-giving department: a lifelike mechanical hog covered in real pigskin, a professional microscope offered during my arachnology phase, and, best of all, a seventeenth-century painting of a Dutch peasant changing a dirty diaper. These things I would keep—and why not? I'd also take the desk he gave me, and the fireplace mantel, and, just on principle, the drafting table, which he clearly bought for himself and tried to pass off as a Christmas present.

Now it seemed that I would be leaving in a van rather than on foot, but, still, I was going to do it, so help me. I pictured myself pulling away from the front of our building, and then I remembered that I don't drive. Hugh would have to do it for me, and well he should after everything he'd put me through. Another problem was where this van might go. An apartment, obviously, but how would I get it? It's all I can do to open my mouth at the post office, so how am I going to talk to a real-estate agent? The language aspect has nothing to do with it, as I'm no more likely to house-hunt in New York than I am in Paris. When discussing sums over sixty dollars, I tend to sweat. Not just my forehead, but all over. Five minutes at the bank and my shirt is transparent. Ten minutes and I'm stuck to my seat. I lost twelve pounds getting the last apartment and all I had to do was sign my name. Hugh handled the rest of it.

On the bright side, I have money, though I'm not exactly sure how to get my hands on it. Bank statements arrive regularly, but I don't open anything that's not personally addressed, or doesn't look like a free sample. Hugh takes care of all that—opens the icky mail and actually reads it. He knows when our insurance payments are due, when it's time to renew our visas, when the warranty on the washer is due to expire. “I think we need to extend this,” he'll say, knowing that if the machine stops working he'll fix it himself, the way he fixes everything. But not me. If I lived alone and something broke, I'd just work around it: use a paint bucket instead of a toilet, buy an ice chest and turn the dead refrigerator into an armoire. Call a repairman? Never. Do it myself? That'll be the day.

At the age of forty-eight, I am afraid of everything and everyone. A child sits beside me on the plane and I make conversation, thinking how stupid I must sound. The downstairs neighbors invite me to a party and, after claiming that I have a previous engagement, I spend the entire evening confined to my bed, afraid to walk around because they might hear my footsteps. I do not know how to turn up the heat, send an e-mail, call the answering machine for my messages, or do anything even remotely creative with a chicken. Hugh takes care of all that, and when he's out of town I eat like a wild animal, the meat still pink, with hair or feathers clinging to it. So is it any wonder he runs from me? No matter how angry I get, it always comes down to this: I'm going to leave and then what? Move in with my dad? Thirty minutes of pure rage and when I finally spot him I realize that I've never been so happy to see anyone in my life.

“There you are,” I say. And when he asks where I have been I answer honestly, and tell him I was lost. ♦

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THE SPORTING SCENE

DANGEROUS GAME

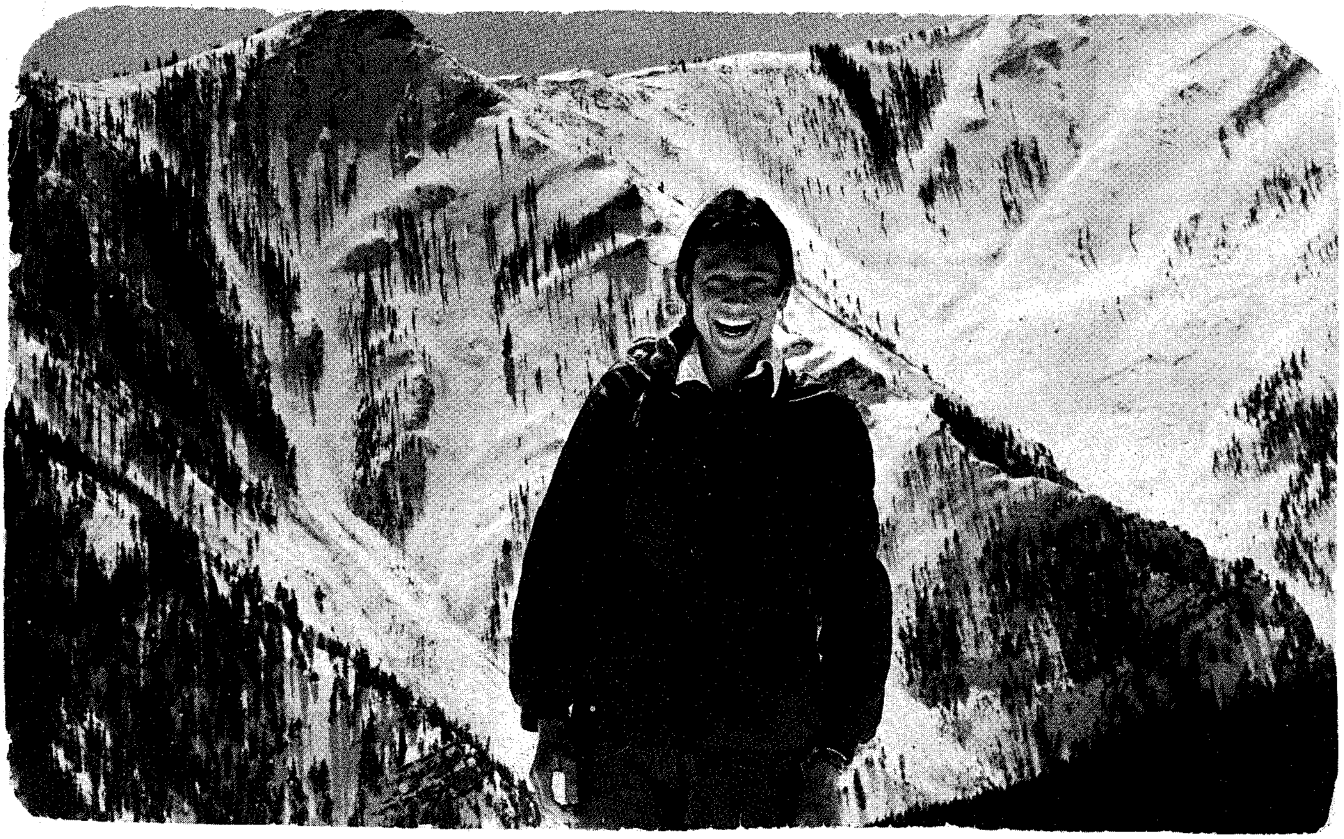
A ski mountaineer and a history of tragedy.

BY NICK PAUMGARTEN

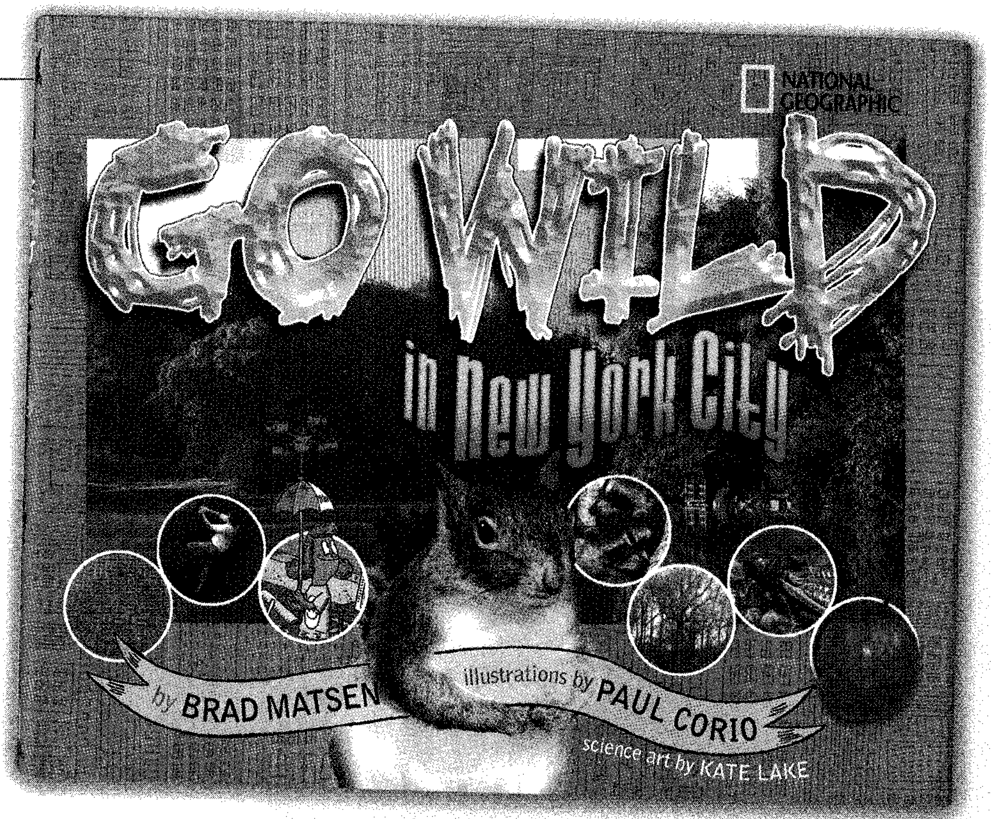
In the ski-bum brain, the chance to ski with a magus like Andrew McLean is the equivalent of an invitation for a night on the town with Don Juan. The allure is great, but there's always a possibility that the excursion will not end well. McLean is a ski mountaineer; he climbs mountains and then skis down them. He is especially fond of skiing chutes—steep, narrow flumes of snow that plunge like elevator shafts through otherwise impassable terrain. Last fall, before he and I met, he'd sent me a copy of "The Chuting Gallery," his self-published guide to the chutes in his home range, the Wasatch Mountains, which are just east of Salt Lake City. He had inscribed it: "I'm looking forward to skiing with you this winter. If you die skiing one of these, I promise it will be renamed in your honor!" I can't say that the prospect hadn't crossed my mind.

McLean has a bit of a history. One of the runs described in "The Chuting Gallery" is named Roman's, after McLean's friend Roman Latta, who, on an outing with him there in 1993, set off an avalanche in which he was buried and killed. Latta was the first of four men who have died while climbing or skiing with McLean. The most famous was Alex Lowe, who was considered by many to be the best mountaineer in the world; Lowe disappeared in a giant avalanche on Shishapangma, in Tibet, in 1999, when he and McLean and others were attempting to become the first Americans to ski a peak higher than eight thousand metres. In all, McLean has lost more than a dozen friends to the mountains—"lost to the mountains" being a locution favored by alpinists, as though skiing or climbing were a sacrificial rite, instead of a voluntary act.

My family has a bit of history, too. My father's father, Harald, was a devoted alpinist, as well as a ski racer and jumper who competed for Austria in the 1928 and 1932 Winter Olympics. After the 1932 Games, in Lake Placid, he stayed in America. He briefly held a job at a bank in New York (the story goes that on his lunch breaks he'd head out to Central Park, remove his suit, hang it on a tree, and go running in his underwear) before deciding that the office life was not for him. He moved to New England to teach skiing, which is how he met my grandmother, a Philadelphia society girl who was among the early wave of modish flatlanders to take up the sport under the tutelage of the Austrians. In the summers, my grandfather went on expeditions to the Fairweather Range, in Alaska. He lived in Philadelphia during the war, but afterward he began spending his winters in St. Anton, in Austria, in order to ski. He was killed in an avalanche there in 1952, when my father, the youngest of five children, was six. Twenty



Meta Burden, the author's aunt, in 1972, in Colorado. She was skiing alone, out of bounds, when she died.



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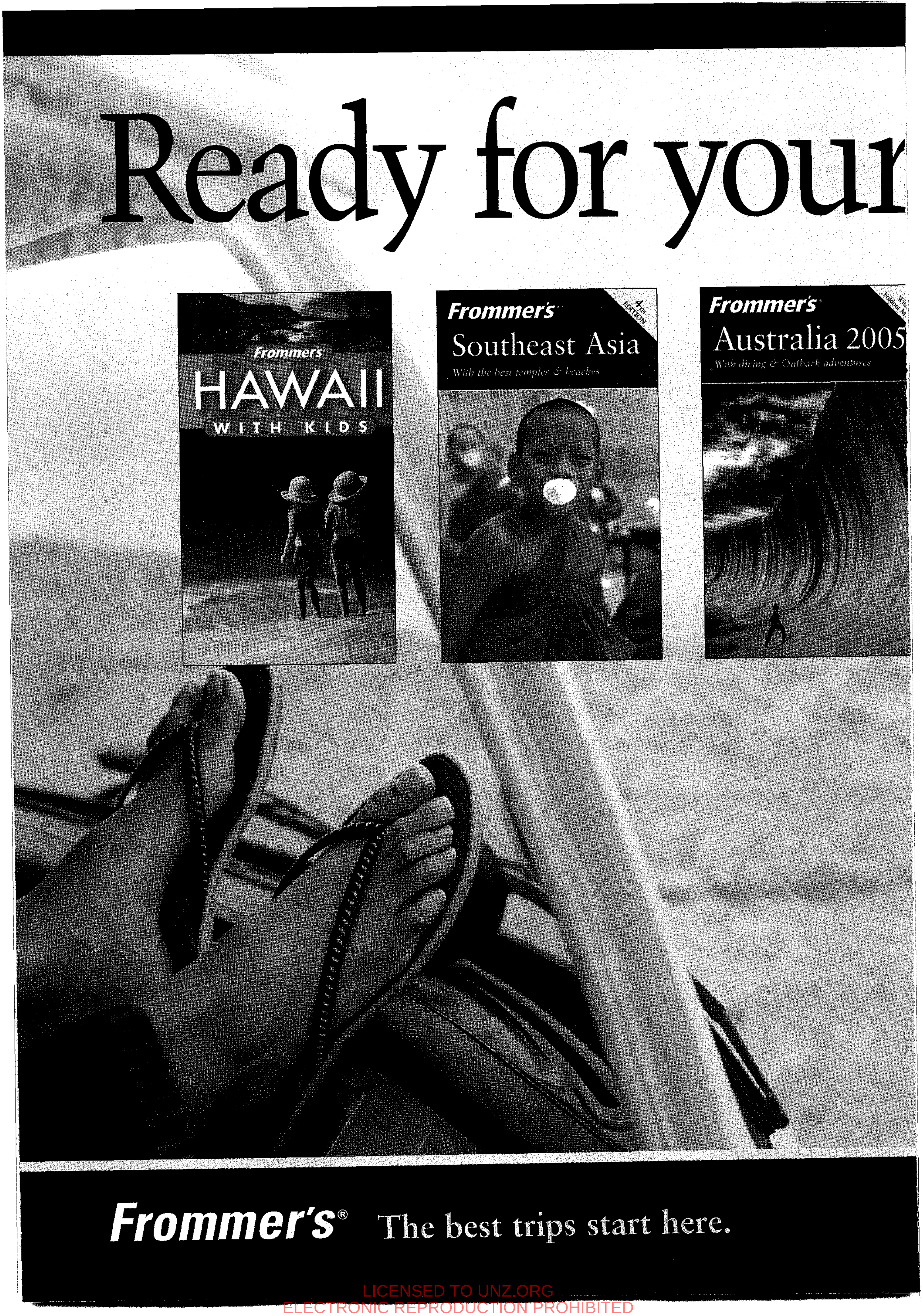
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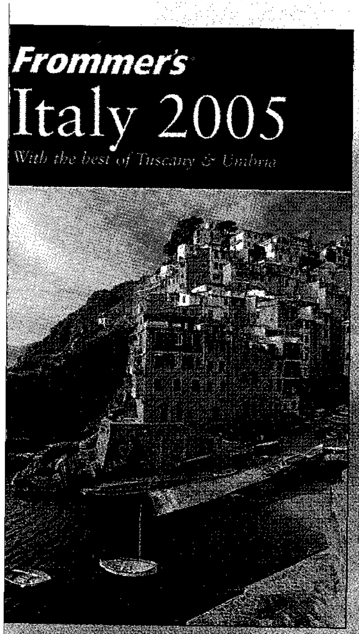
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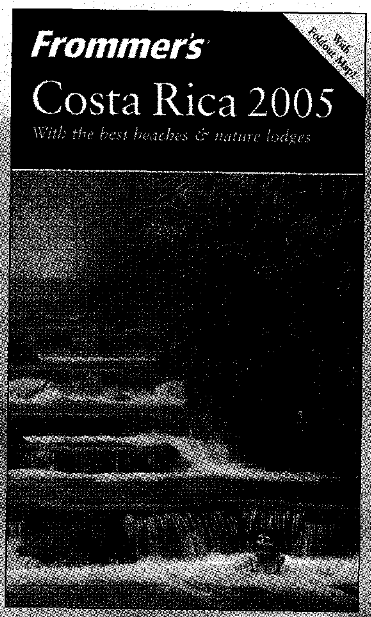
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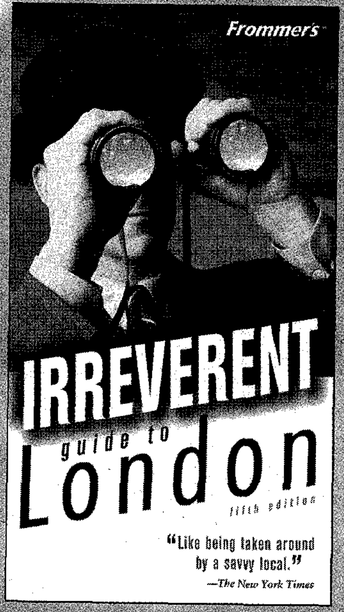
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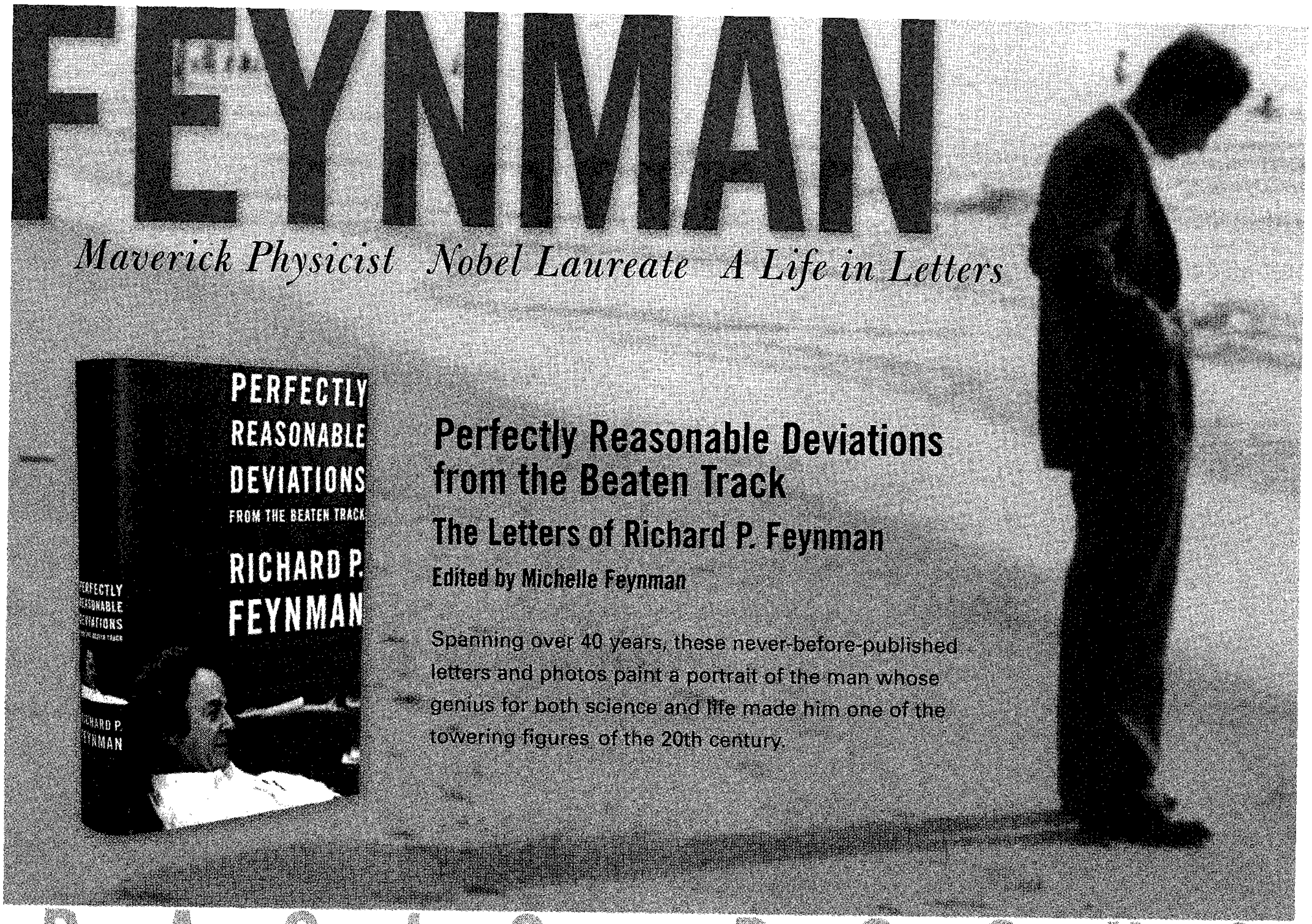

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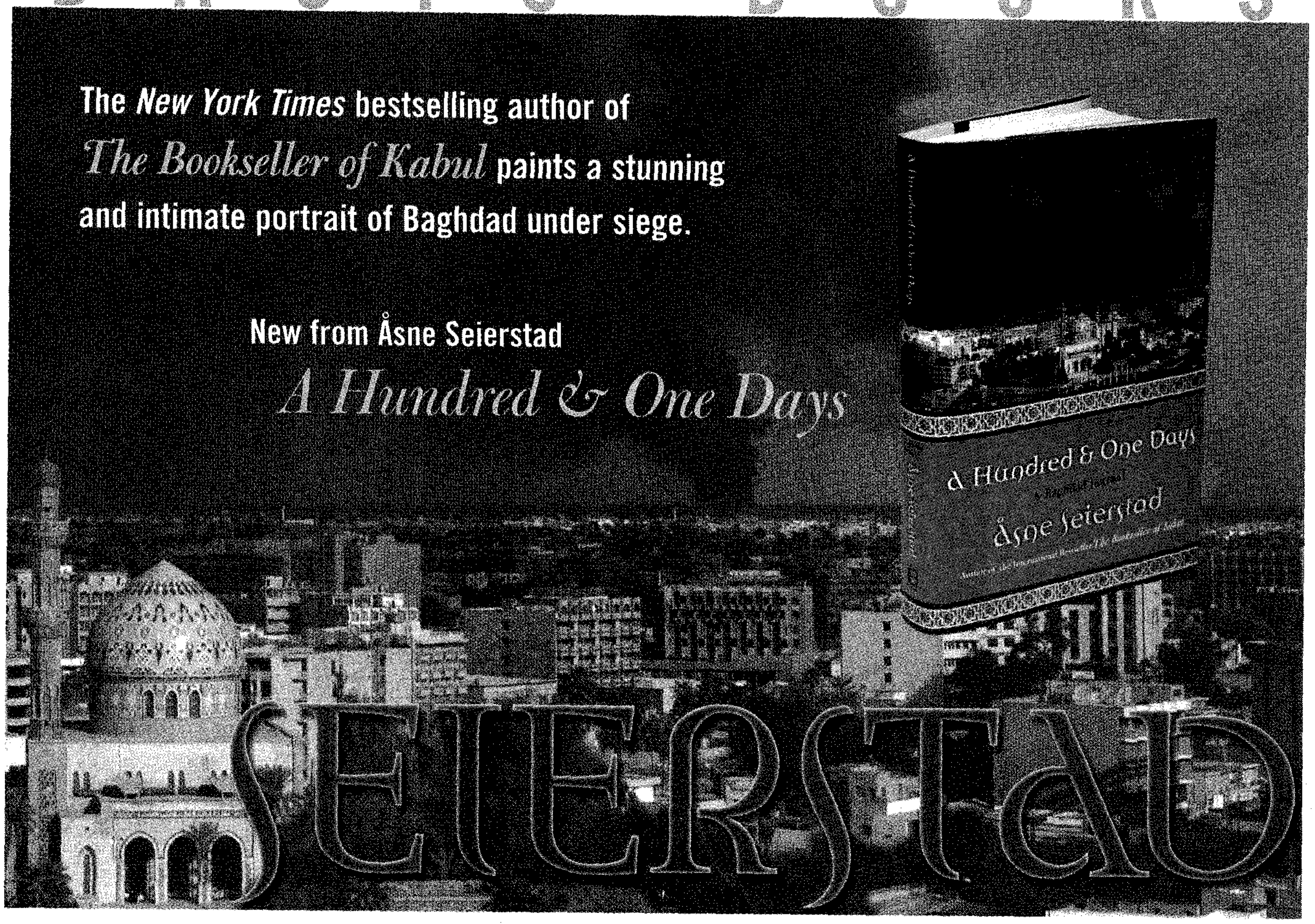

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years later, one of my father’s sisters died in an avalanche while skiing. She had two children, ages seven and three. Since then, there have been a few other incidents. My father was nearly killed in an avalanche while I was skiing with him, and between us we have witnessed a fair number of slides. There was also a disturbing encounter with a crevasse—a snow bridge gave way, and I fell in. I hung by my arms over a void until two guides pulled me out.

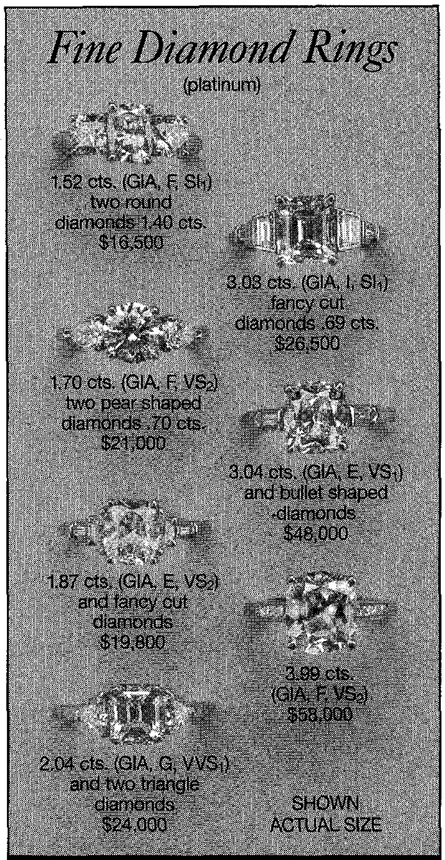
Friends and relatives treat this high incidence of snow trouble as evidence of a family curse, or plain idiocy. The weight of these opinions is such that every time I head out on a trip that involves the kind of skiing that can lead to trouble—glaciers, powder fields, steeps—a certain premonitory queasiness sneaks up on me. The anxiety that comes of tempting fate, especially in pursuit of such an indulgence, helps generate dreams of death by suffocation or falling. But in daylight disquiet gives way to delight, and I find myself doing things that may or may not be dangerous, half aware that at any second my situation, as well as that of my wife and children, could dramatically change. It’s a fraught kind of bliss.

A year and a half ago, I read a story in the magazine *Skiing* entitled “11 Excuses for NOT Skiing with Andrew McLean.” One was “He’ll dust you.” Another was “Tragedy dogs him.” Perhaps with that in mind, I found myself, within minutes of meeting McLean, telling him about my family, under the guise of trying to persuade him to take it easy on me. (A more direct approach had failed. “Don’t know what you think you signed up for here, Nick. You’re with the wrong guy.”) He seemed to home in on the infatuation, rather than on its consequences. “Sounds like you’ve got skiing in the blood,” he said. But later, when I passed along the additional piece of information that my great-aunt—my grandfather’s sister—a world-champion racer and fervent mountain girl, had been crippled in the fifties by a runaway ski, he said, “Maybe I should be a little concerned about skiing with *you*.”

McLean’s approach to peril is to see humor in it. Certainly, close calls can be comic, and McLean can laugh, in the way of soldiers and crooks, over many of his near-misses. There was the time he cartwheeled down five hundred vertical feet of cliffs, only to land upright on his skis, unaccountably alive and intact, or the time a boulder fell and pulverized itself on a ledge just above his head. Although there isn’t really anything funny about avalanches, his manner of survival, in a few of the half dozen or so that he has been caught in—clinging to the trunk of an aspen tree, high above the ground, or buried upside down, with his legs sticking straight out of the snow—can sound cartoonish. The only thing that spoils the Wile E. Coyote effect (he is forty-three years old, yet he has never so much as broken a bone while skiing) is that a number of his narrow escapes have coincided with the deaths of other people. This is something he doesn’t much like to discuss.

In “The Chuting Gallery,” McLean inventories the hazards of his favorite routes with a cheek that, in the solemn and superstitious realm of mountain chronicles, borders on blasphemy. In some quarters, it is considered an irresponsible book, as appropriate as a guide to robbing banks. The northeast couloir of a peak called the Pfeifferhorn, McLean writes, is “more fun than running with scissors, sticking paperclips into electrical sockets or taping firecrackers to a cat’s tail.” Of Hellgate Couloir, a run that involves rappelling down two cliffs, he writes, “Short, stout, steep and scary. What more could you ask for?”

“The Chuting Gallery” begins with a disclaimer, from McLean’s mother: “The fact that this is a ‘guidebook’ does not mean that you, the reader, should take it seriously. Obviously, no one in their right mind would ski this stuff—and you shouldn’t either.” By “this stuff,” she means terrain that is challenging enough to fit under the standard definition of extreme skiing, first codified by the American steep-skiing pioneer Chris Landry: “If you fall, you die.” McLean ascends quickly, sometimes with the aid of ropes, ice axes, and crampons. And he descends carefully. He is not a hot dog. What he’s after is an elusive blend of anxiety and exhilaration—a level of difficulty that requires physical and analytical prowess, as well as self-discipline and imagination. He also wants to be first. It’s the adventurer’s injunction: do it before anyone else does, or at least do it differently. His calling takes him to such



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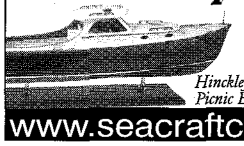

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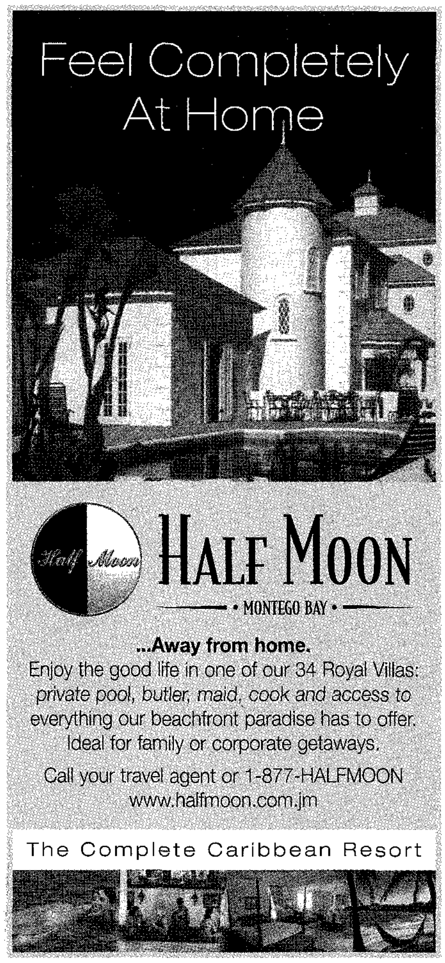
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remote places as Antarctica and the Himalayas. He goes on two big expeditions a year. This month, McLean and three friends are going to Alaska for four weeks in an effort to become the first people ever to ski the Archangel Ridge of Mt. Foraker, a sister peak of Mt. McKinley. It is a gruesome and isolated route, eleven thousand vertical feet—dark, cold, high, scary. It has been *climbed* only twice before. What's more, to reach Foraker the group will have to climb up and ski down another difficult peak, in order to avoid sixteen river crossings, not to mention bears.

There are, of course, many extreme skiers in the world, and many mountain climbers, and quite a few who combine the skills of both. The game has changed since my grandfather's day. The vogue is to refer to them as "adventure athletes." They star in films, have sponsorships, and market themselves aggressively, inspiring an ever-growing array of imitators who fan out into the hills and devour fresh terrain, like so many Scrubbing Bubbles. McLean, however, is a true shellback. He is as hungry for accomplishment as the rest, yet he has learned to balance the ragtag joys of wandering the mountains with the requirements of making a living at it. He'd be doing what he's doing even if nobody was watching. In some respects, he is not an extreme athlete at all but just a lucid and devoted rambler, with high standards and a low pulse—a descendant as much of Kit Carson as of Harry Houdini.

On my first morning in Utah, I met McLean in a parking lot at the base of Little Cottonwood Canyon, which cuts east into the Wasatch, about a half hour south of Salt Lake City. Little Cottonwood is home to the Snowbird and Alta ski areas and the gateway to a vast array of backcountry terrain. It is known for having the best powder snow in the world.

McLean has the trim and sinewy build of a Sherpa (he is five feet ten and weighs a hundred and forty-five pounds) and a rubbery, slightly hunched posture, but his bright-blue eyes, bobblehead proportions, and anachronistic helmet of light-brown hair give him an impish appearance. In warmer months, he likes to ride a unicycle on mountain trails. There is relish in his smile; he likes to say, in jest, "It isn't fun until someone gets hurt," and he enjoys watching lesser men attempt to keep up with him. He once wrote, "There is nothing finer in life than enjoying a chilled tin of congealed octopus while listening to the moans and groans of fellow human beings . . . as they struggle on a slick 45-degree track." The sado-stoicism is not bigheaded or bullying; it's how he conveys to his partners his own particular blend of enthusiasm and forbearance. It is a more garrulous version of the ethic you come across in the classic mountaineering tales of Chris Bonnington, in which the climbers, many of them former British military men, invariably respond to serious trouble—storms, avalanches, broken bones—by brewing up a pot of tea.

McLean was accompanied by Polly Samuels, his fiancée; they were to be married in two months. Samuels, thirty-five years old and a lawyer in the Utah attorney general's office, has red hair and an aspect of seriousness. She has become a formidable skier in her own right; last year, she was the North American women's champion in randonee racing—long slogs up and down mountains in touring gear. (Among the men, McLean usually finishes in the top three or four.) McLean drove. As he navigated the winding road up the canyon, he craned his neck and pointed out some favorite chutes, which coursed through the cliffs on either side like waterfalls. They were avalanche paths, basically, but if you have a taste for such things you begin to view all terrain in terms of what is plausible and you imagine leaving tracks everywhere—on distant peaks or a neighbor's snowy lawn—much as fishermen cannot regard a body of water without thinking of casting a line.

That morning, we took it easy: we started at the Alta ski area, where in order to gain altitude we took a chairlift, and to warm up we did two intermediate runs on machine-groomed snow. McLean, an advocate of leg power, doesn't often consent to such indignities. But after a couple of hours we ventured into more McLeanian terrain—Main Baldy Chute, a long, regal cataract that, being avalanche-prone, is rarely open. It happened also to be the site of his conversion to chuting, fourteen years earlier. The run required a half-hour hike and several dozen compact turns on old chalky snow,

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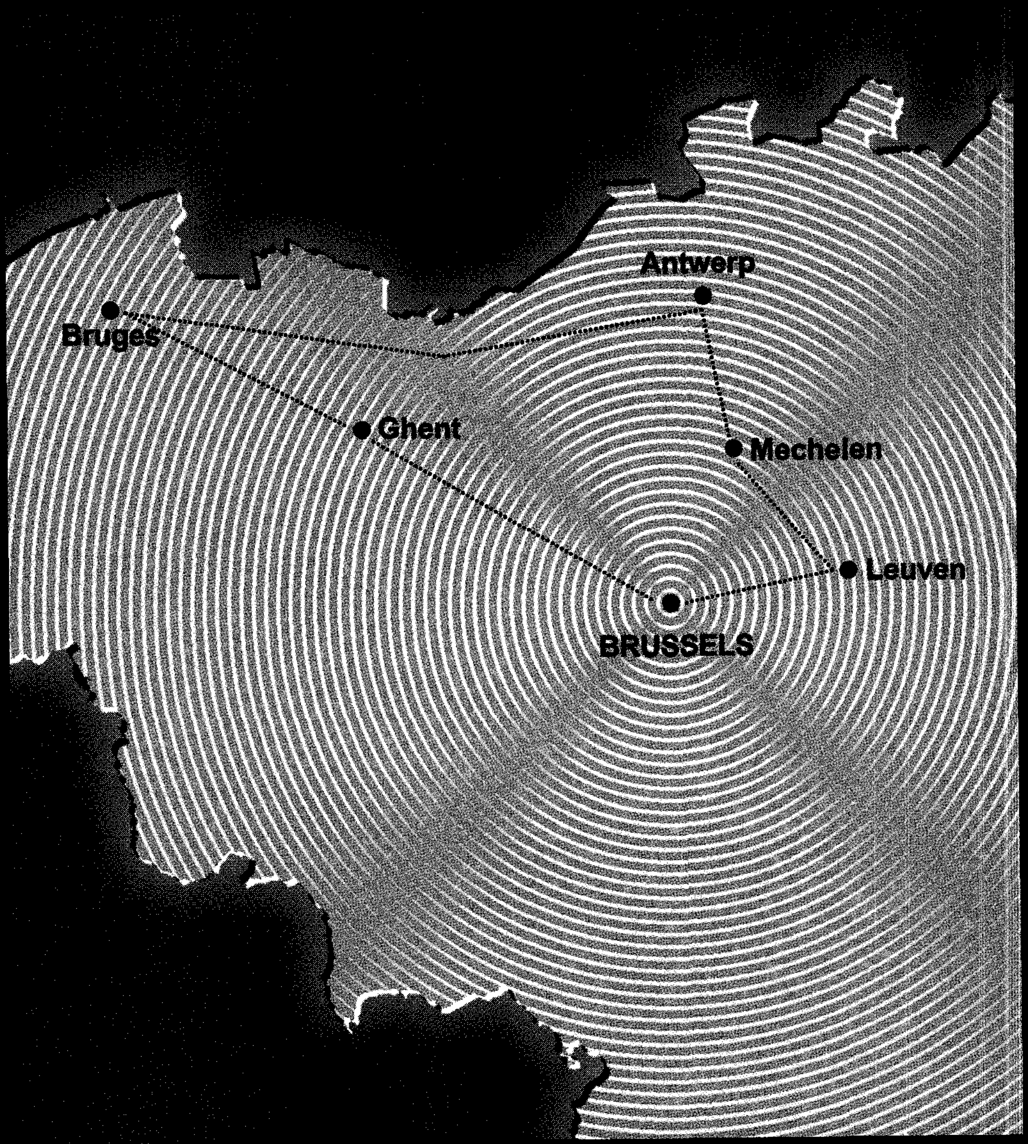
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the joy deriving, in part, from the sensation of simultaneously resisting and submitting to gravity. McLean's skiing style was tight and neat, but deliberately functional and in no obvious way vain. At the bottom, McLean called out, "Main Baldy—check!" as though he were planning to have me ski every chute in his book.

We went to the base of the mountain and retrieved more gear. We were using randonee equipment, which weighs less than standard alpine equipment and is designed for going uphill as well as down. For the ascent, the heel of the binding detaches from the ski, as with a cross-country or telemark ski, and you stick a climbing skin, which is a reusable adhesive strip with mohair or nylon on one side, to the base of each ski (people used to use real seal skins); the grain prevents you from sliding backward. To descend, you peel off the skins and lock down the heel. Each of us wore an avalanche beacon—a transceiver about the size of a Walkman, which sends out a signal in case of burial—and a pack that contained a probe and a shovel, for locating and digging out a buried companion.

We left Alta and hiked up a ridge for a half hour or so to a place called Wolverine Cirque, an amphitheatre of chutes guarded by cornices. McLean dropped into one called the Scythe. He jumped up and down on a pillow of snow near the top, to see that it was stable, then hopped back and forth down the slope before skirting under an outcropping, in case the next skier, me, set off a slide. I did not. The snow was deep and a little windblown: not bad. After another pitch, the chute opened onto a bowl that looked like a place where you didn't want to hang around. It was where Roman Latta, among others over the years, had been buried. We crossed a basin, skinned up for forty-five minutes, then skied down to Alta.

Back at my desk five days later, I got an e-mail from McLean: "Utah had its first avalanche fatality the day after you left"—the first, that is, of the season. It had occurred at Wolverine. He sent a photograph of the accident site, with a diagram of our route and the victim's. They weren't far apart. "It turns out there was one other fatality, two other people missing, and one person who was buried and dug out." Also, he said, a place called the Meadow Chutes, where we had spent my last morning, going up and down, rapturously, during a snowstorm, had avalanched—"ripped out wall to wall"—right after we were there.

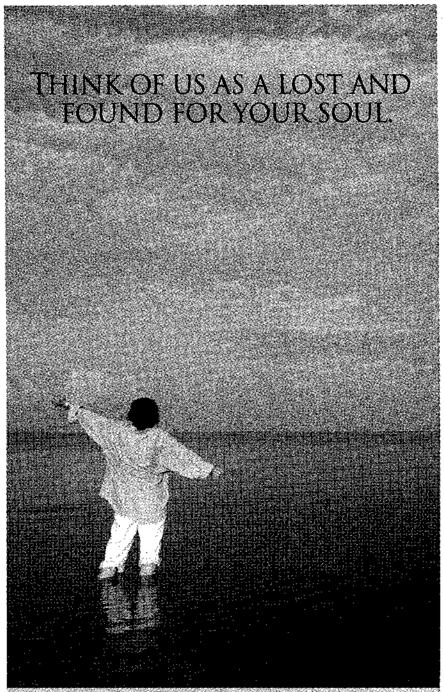
My aunt, whose name was Meta Burden, was skiing alone when she died. She had had an argument, so she did a rash thing. She skied into Cristy Gully, which in 1972 lay outside the area boundary at Aspen Mountain. Half a foot of new snow had fallen atop ten inches of two-day-old snow, and apparently there had been a great deal of avalanche activity in the area that morning. But she was a headstrong woman, confident in her abilities. She had lived in Aspen for four years, and was intermittently deranged by anger over the encroachment of more and more people into terrain that she liked to consider her own.

That evening, her husband reported her missing, and at half past six ski patrollers began a search in the dark. They followed her tracks into Cristy Gully. There is an account of the search in "The Snowy Torrents," a volume assembled by government avalanche forecasters, with evaluations of avalanche accidents in the United States. The rescuers, it says,

> probed and scuffed in the runout zone, and within 45 minutes they found one ski and one pole. Coleman lanterns were set up at the points where Burden's tracks ended and where the clues were found. . . . At 2230 hours, Burden was found on the first pass of the probe line 60 feet above her ski and pole. Efforts at resuscitation and heart massage were unsuccessful. Her body was buried in 3 feet of snow.

It appeared that she had died of suffocation. The report noted that she was an experienced skier, and concluded, "Burden knew the dangers involved and ignored them."

The novelist James Salter wrote about my aunt's death, some years ago, in an essay called "The Skiing Life." Like many men, he seems to have been somewhat smitten by her. He called her a "goddess." "There was a woman I knew who used to ski every day, all season long, whatever the weather, whatever the conditions," he wrote. "Later someone told me that she died on the very same day her father had, years before. I never bothered to confirm it, but I think it must be true; I think it was part of the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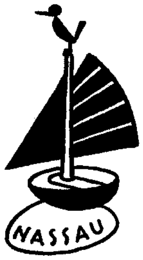
pact." It was not true. The pact, though, I could understand.

Her father had died while skiing alone, too. The night before, he had remarked to his sister that he'd witnessed a lot of avalanches that afternoon and that he'd have to be careful. (His family was back home in Philadelphia; he had wanted Meta and her twin sister to cut school and spend the winter with him in Austria, but my grandmother had said no.) Still, the next afternoon, after a day out with a friend, my grandfather decided to take one last run by himself. An avalanche caught him in a gully between the Osthang and the old Kandahar downhill course; when rescuers found his body, they concluded, from the tranquil look on his face, that he had broken his neck.



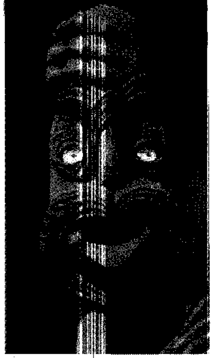
This winter, I stumbled on a third account of my aunt's accident, a 1987 poem called "The Death of Meta Burden in an Avalanche," by Frederick Seidel. It is a difficult poem, as impenetrable as "The Snowy Torrents" is precise. "You are reborn flying to outski / The first avalanche each spring, / And buried alive." Seidel, who, it turns out, also met and admired my aunt, seems to imagine what it feels like to be entombed in snow: "I cannot see. / I will not wake though it's a dream. / I move my head from side to side. / I cannot move." Later, he writes, "Everything fits my body perfectly now that I'm about to disappear."

It is, not surprisingly, a grim way to go. If you trigger an avalanche, there are measures you can take to avoid burial, or at least to improve the odds of surviving. The first thing to do is attempt to ski out of it, although as the slab of snow breaks from the layer beneath it and begins to move, accelerating down the mountain face like a book sliding off a tilted table, it becomes impossible for a skier to generate enough speed or change direction. Within seconds, the slab degenerates into a whirlwind. The snow has astonishing power, and as it rips off your gear and throws you into a tumble you should thrash and swim, in order to stay near the surface. Any attempt to get one good last breath will likely result in a mouthful of snow. Snow crams into your ears and under your eyelids. You may be dashed into a tree or a rock, but the force of the snow alone can break your leg or neck. As the slide slows, you are supposed to cup your hands in front of your mouth to create a pocket of air. Your chances improve if you are head up and face up—and if some part of you is visible to others, if there are others—but this choice is not yours. As the snow comes to a stop, it is like cement. The weight of it can press your last breath out of you, like a python. Your little breathing pocket, if you have one, will soon become carbon dioxide or a block of ice. After five minutes, the odds of survival drop swiftly. You pray that someone digs you out.

Every year nearly two hundred people are caught in avalanches in the United States. On average, about thirty of them die. The fatality rate has risen steadily since 1991. An increasing percentage of the victims are snowmobilers, who engage in a practice called high-marking, competing to see who can cut a track highest on a steep slope. Still, with improvements in gear and a trend toward backcountry exploration, more and more skiers and snowboarders are venturing out into terrain where survival depends, to a certain degree, on luck.

"Nobody goes out to die," Jill Fredston, an avalanche specialist in Alaska, told me. "Everyone goes out in pursuit of life. We make a ton of mistakes, but we usually get away with them. Luck is negative reinforcement. And you have probability and complacency working against you."

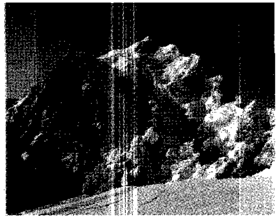
Last winter, Mike Elggren, a forty-one-year-old friend of McLean's, was caught in a slide while backcountry skiing in British Columbia. He was skinning up a slope with ten friends and three guides. At one point, one of the guides decided that she didn't like where they were. She took two steps, and the whole slope jigsawed above them—a molten acre. Elggren was shoved forward and sucked downhill, head first. His skis pulled him deeper. "I looked up to see where I was, and the lights went out," Elggren told me. "I got crushed. The pressure was tremendous. As the snow stopped, it made a real squeaky sound." His hand was in front of his face, but he couldn't see it. His nose and mouth were choked with snow. He was indignant at



From JORDAN to NEW ZEALAND

A RETROSPECTIVE of the TRAVEL CHANNEL series

By PETER GREENBERG



For the past four years, chief correspondent for the Travel Channel, Peter Greenberg, has been taking viewers on a series of unprecedented journeys called "The Royal Tour." In Jordan, New Zealand, Peru, and soon, Jamaica, Greenberg's guides for these Travel Channel specials are the heads of state—in history-making, personal tours of their countries.

Some years ago, I was in Amman, Jordan, on assignment for the Travel Channel. In order to shoot aerials of the expansive Wadi Rum desert, my crew and I desperately needed a helicopter. A Jordanian friend told me he would arrange a meeting with commander of the Jordanian Special Forces, Prince Abdullah, eldest son of then King Hussein.

I got my helicopter; we got our shots. But most important, the Prince and I became friends. We discovered common ground ranging from favorite movies to more substantive issues concerning the delicate balance of power in the Middle East. On subsequent visits, I shared meals with his family, and got to explore parts of the country not found in most guidebooks.

In January 1999, knowing he didn't have long to live, Hussein returned to Jordan. Then Crown Prince Hassan, the King's younger brother, was expected to inherit the throne, but in a surprising turn of events, Hussein passed the crown to Abdullah.

While Israel, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia surround this tiny kingdom, Jordan is extremely traveler friendly. It has some of the world's most significant archaeological treasures—from the splendors of Petra to well-preserved Roman cities such as Jerash. It has always welcomed visitors with a social and religious tolerance that sets it apart from much of the Middle East—perhaps because the country's leadership has always had strong ties with the West.

That may also explain why four years ago, the King became my special tour guide. For five days we climbed mountains, went scuba diving in the Red Sea, raced Harleys, and flew all over the country in His Majesty King Abdullah II's Blackhawk helicopter for the "Jordan: The Royal Tour" special. It would mark the first time in television history that a ruling monarch had ever hosted a program of this kind.

We visited Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Though this southern desert city was "lost" for more than five hundred years, it has become a popular attraction. A truly magical place with buildings carved from sandstone cliffs, Petra's early morning and late afternoon light transforms the location into a mystical, seductive experience. While there, we camped with Bedouins in the desert and rode on camels. One of our biggest surprises in Jordan was a white-water adventure in Wadi Mujib—in a country few people think even *has* water. It was one of the more beautiful places I'd ever seen.

"Jordan: The Royal Tour" was scheduled to première on September 24, 2001, but in light of 9/11 aired in April 2002. By then, I was in New Zealand, making plans for the second TV special. If I thought that my Jordan experiences had tested my agility, I was about to be surprised again.

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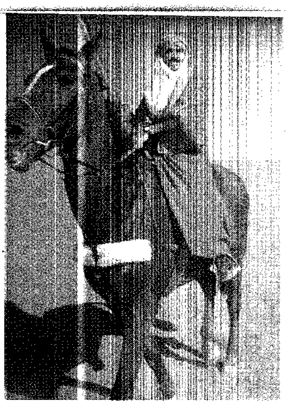

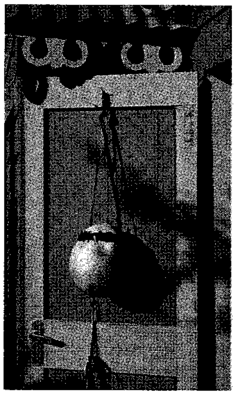

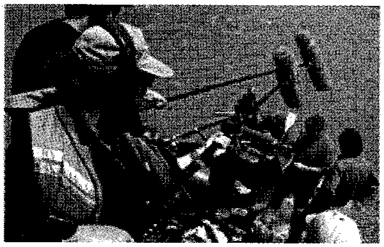

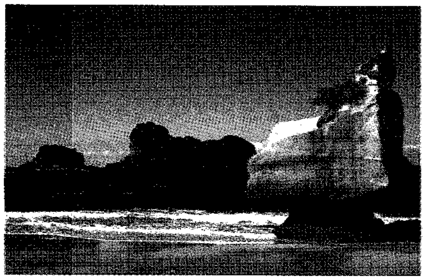

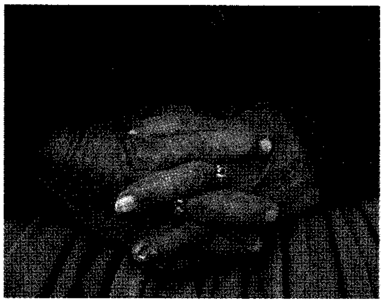

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IN THE LAND OF THE HOBBITS

Within a few weeks, the crew had assembled, and Prime Minister Helen Clark was off and running on a wild, magical mystery tour of her country. In five short days, she took me ice climbing 11,000 feet up in the Southern Alps. We blasted down narrow canyons and went forty-five knots in a jet boat screaming along the Shotover River; kayaked with the world's friendliest (and most fearless) seals in the Abel Tasman National Park; hugged a narrow, precipitous dirt road known as Skippers Canyon accessible only by four-wheel drive vehicles. Then came the hike through the Hollyford Track, surrounded by a few million acres of mountains, glaciers, lakes, and the primeval Podocarp forest, complete with hidden falls.

A short helicopter ride away was New Zealand's North Island, which meant a visit to the thermal village of Whakarewarewa near Rotorua, and a traditional Maori warrior greeting. Of all of New Zealand's natural splendors, few surpass the geothermal wonders of this region, which includes hot springs, geysers, and mud pools.

There were more North Island adventures: The Prime Minister introduced me to Waitomo and the "Lost World." That's where Clark insisted I go with her in a controlled 350-foot descent into an enormous sinkhole. Sliding slowly and precariously down a rope no thicker than a pen was only half the fun. Once there, more than thirty miles of cave passage with a surreal limestone landscape awaited.

With all "Royal Tours," there was always one abiding rule: Everything a head of state showed me, or that we did, had to be accessible to everyone watching the TV program. This show was so well received that Air New Zealand now offers our exact itinerary as a special tour package. (Bungee jumping is optional, however.)

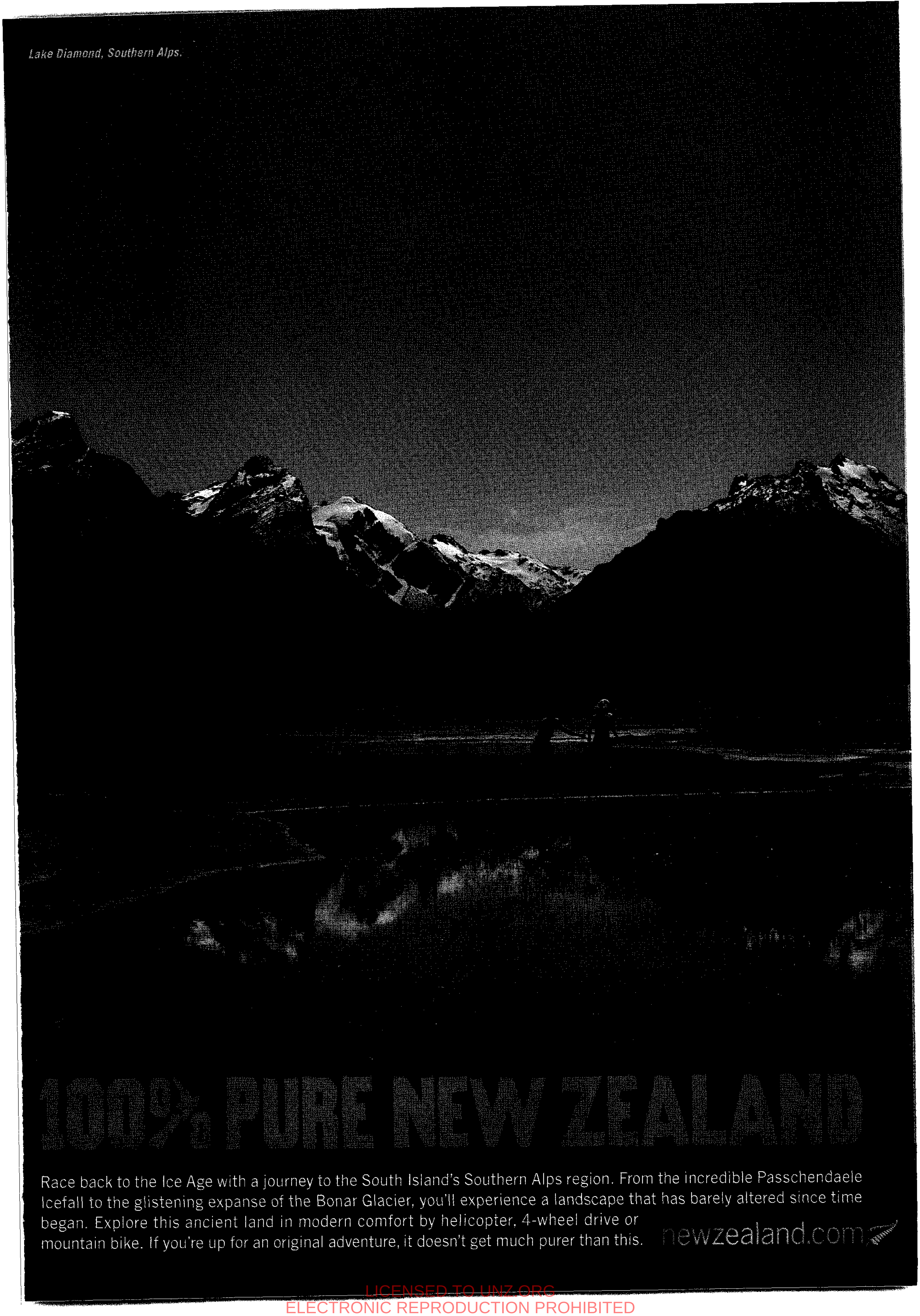
PERU REDUX

The next stop on the "Royal Tour" was Peru. Shot a year ago, it featured President Alejandro Toledo. (Previously covered in the 11/8/04 issue.) Few countries can boast an ocean coastline, a 20,000-foot-high mountain range, and a tropical jungle, not to mention the only country that was home to the Inca Empire. Peru is a country that exists at the edge of history and on the threshold of a dream.

My experiences in Jordan and New Zealand only partially prepared me for the wild ride I was to have in Peru, a country roughly equal in size to Alaska. In five short days, Toledo took me surfing, and we climbed the Andes and Machu Picchu through the lost city of the Incas. Later we raced dune buggies in the sands near Paracas and swam with 20,000 sea lions in the cold Pacific. High-altitude helicopters took us to the top of Cabana, the President's home village, 13,000 feet up in the mountains. Unmistakably, another trip of a lifetime.

Next up, the Travel Channel premières "Jamaica: The Royal Tour" with Prime Minister P.J. Patterson as Greenberg's personal guide. Patterson takes Greenberg on a helicopter tour that crisscrosses Jamaica. The pair raft down the Rio Grande River; take high-strung zip lines between the trees above Chukka Cove and climb Dunn's River Falls. Greenberg is also taught the finer points of cricket and the secrets to jerk chicken. And yes, reggae is also involved . . .

(Greenberg is currently planning "Royal Tour" sequels on Mexico, Sweden, Dubai, and at least seven other countries.)



Lake Diamond, Southern Alps.

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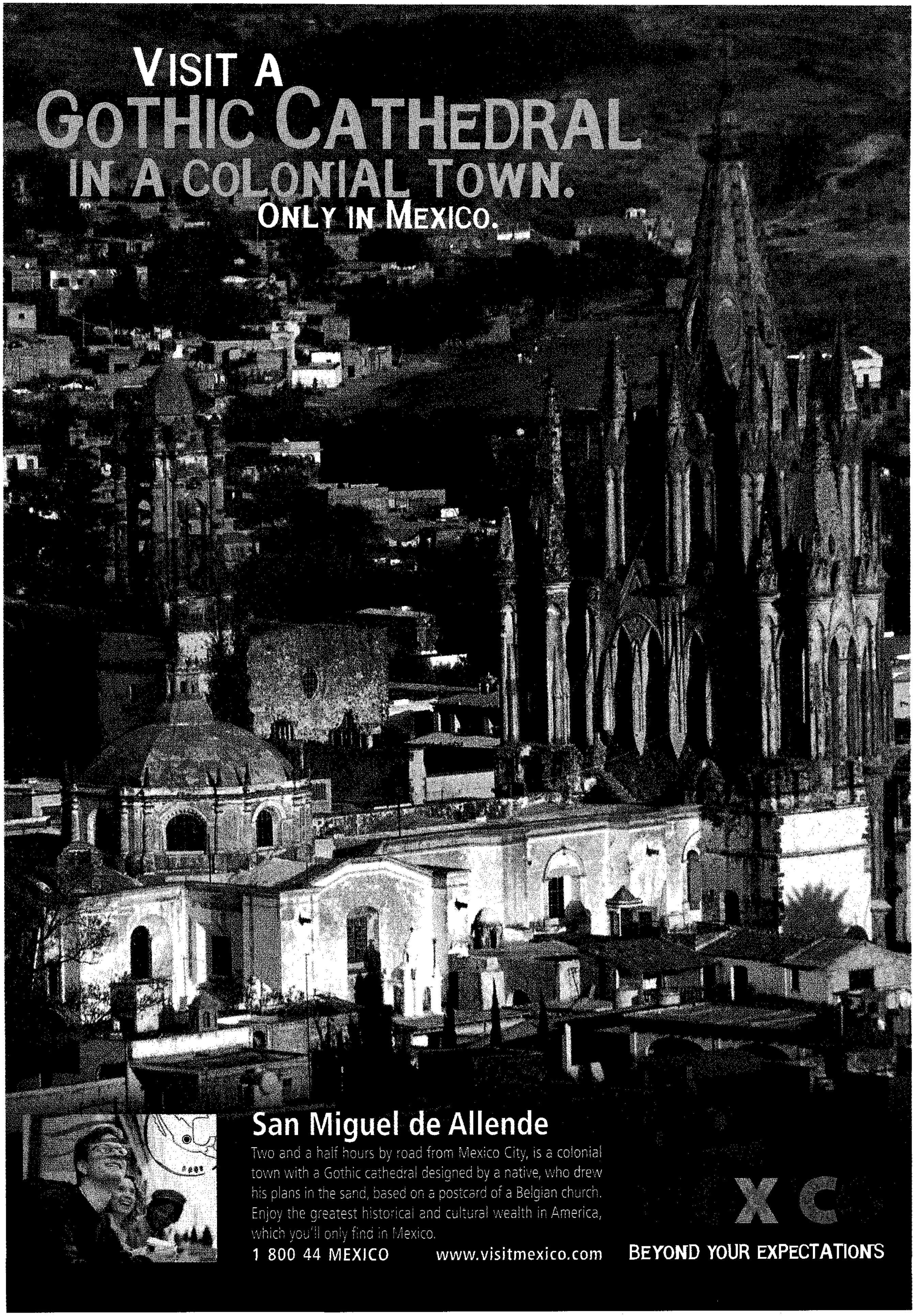
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BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS

first, incredulous that this should happen to him. "That gave way to utter panic. I was screaming. I remember not being embarrassed to be screaming like a little girl. I wanted to flail, but I was pinned." After a moment, he regained some composure. "My brain wouldn't allow me to have any hope, the situation was so dire. I was rebreathing my carbon dioxide. My diaphragm and lungs were crushed. And then I started going away. I made my peace with the world. I was sad for the people up top and for my family. I was thinking of my parents and my brother and sisters, and my dog. Then I just went away. It felt like fading into black velvet."

Elggren's friends, some of whom had been partially buried and had dug themselves out, picked up his beacon signal. They were extraordinarily efficient, taking turns digging, but he was buried head down, six feet deep. When they got to him, ten minutes had passed, and he wasn't breathing. It took twenty minutes to resuscitate him by mouth-to-mouth. He remembers coming to and wondering why everyone was making such a fuss. They built a sled out of their backpacks, and towed him a mile or so back to a hut, where a helicopter was waiting. Aside from ligament damage to both knees, he seems to be fine. He has gone backcountry skiing regularly this winter (although not with McLean: "Andrew's on a different plane. He's so damn badass"). After the accident, Elggren's mother pleaded with him to give up backcountry skiing, but, he said, "Luckily, she came around to a more rational point of view." A few weeks ago, he returned to British Columbia to repeat last year's trip—same guide, same friends, same hut.

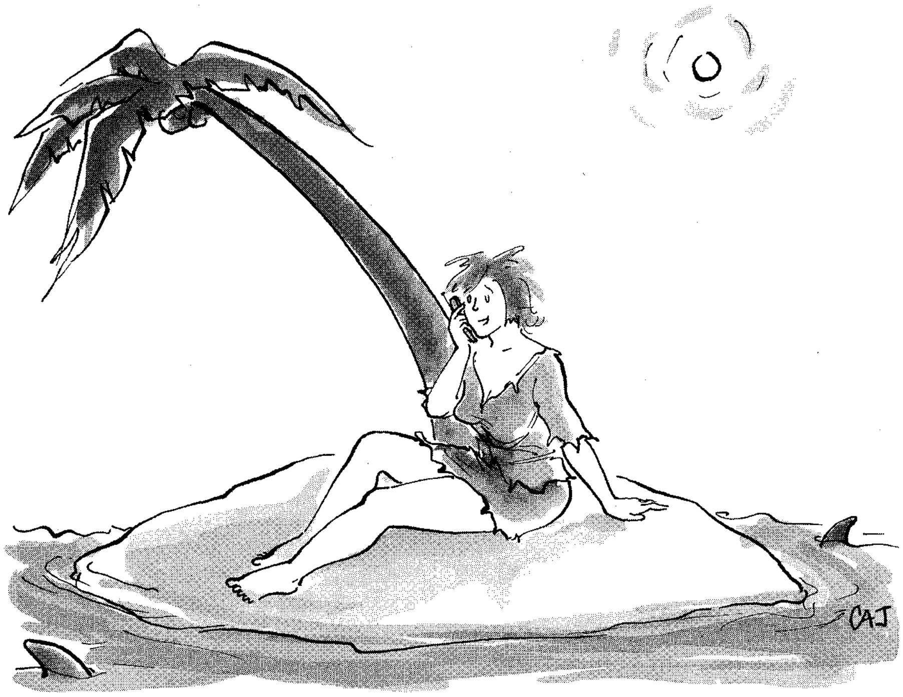
One spring day, when I was eleven, my father and I were skiing off-piste (off the marked trails) in Verbier, Switzerland. The conditions were exquisite but dodgy—a half metre of fresh snow warming in the sun—and my father, realizing abruptly that we were in a place we shouldn't have been (always this belated moment of recognition), decided that we would traverse, one at a time, to more moderately pitched terrain. I stayed behind on a ridge, as he started across the top of a gully. Then the whole slope seemed to explode, and he disappeared. In those days, I had no experience with avalanches, only a dim sense that they killed Paumgartens, so I failed to keep an eye on him or to take any precautions of my own. Avalanche-safety equipment wasn't widely used back then; anyway, we didn't have any. For several minutes, I assumed that he was gone (it seemed fitting that he would be) and sat crying in the snow until I heard him calling my name. I made it down in time to see a snow-splattered ghoul stumbling out of a vast field of debris. The avalanche had carried him a few hundred yards, and then, as it slowed, poured over a bump in the terrain, which caused him to pop up to the surface. The slide was a big one: he was lucky; we were lucky. He was beaten up but all right. When Meta's twin heard about the accident, she wrote him an angry letter. Except for my father, my mother—whose feelings about all this are rather complicated—and their two sons, the family had quit this kind of skiing. My uncle, for example, tends to ski in bluejeans and stick to marked trails. ("I like the groomed part, the avenues," he says.) But my father did not give it up, although he did resolve always to hire a guide if he was going to ski off-piste. In the years since, I have been more than happy to accompany him.

Skiing, McLean wrote me once, "is like some form of religious practice or martial arts discipline." Years of devotion lead to proficiency, which yields a sense of ease and a chance at transcendence. McLean started on the path at Alta; he was born in Salt Lake City. One of his earliest ski memories is of a man breaking his femur on the rope tow at the Alta Lodge. In his recollection, the bone ripped through the man's pant leg, but he was laughing, because he was drunk. McLean's father was an ophthalmologist and a devoted sailor, and the family spent several years trying to find a town where he could both practice medicine and get out on the water. Salt Lake was not the place. They moved around for a few years—Vermont, Connecticut, Florida, Haiti—and then settled in Seattle. McLean's mother taught skiing nearby, at Alpental, in the Cascades. McLean quickly progressed to a point where she had to make a deal with him: she'd buy him a season pass if he promised to ski one run with her a year. He tended to wait until the last day.

As a kid, McLean was an experimental prankster, a troublemaker of the promising kind. He owned a welding torch and used it both to build go-carts and to fill bread bags with oxyacetylene gas, which he and his younger brother would then place in mailboxes and blow up using fuses made of paper. "We eventually worked our way up to Hefty trash bags, which were deafening," he recalled. "Come to think of it, that might be a good idea for do-it-yourself backcountry avalanche bombs." (Explosives are commonly used at ski areas to set off controlled avalanches.)

He went to the Rhode Island School

"All of a sudden, everyone seems younger than I am."



"Wait—I almost forgot why I called."

• •

of Design, where he studied to become an industrial designer. His roommate there happened to be an avid rock climber from Oregon, who began teaching McLean how to climb. Rhode Island is not known for its mountains, but the two of them made the most of the available terrain. On one occasion, they were arrested for trespassing when the police found them dangling from a rope on an abandoned railroad bridge. On another occasion, campus police caught McLean on the roof of the museum ("It had this perfect chimney") and mistook his bag of climbing chalk for cocaine. While at RISD, he fashioned a device that he called the Talon, a three-pronged steel-plated climbing aid, which he eventually sold to Black Diamond, a climbing-equipment company. Six years later, after jobs designing medical equipment and boats, he was hired by Black Diamond, and he moved back to Salt Lake, where the company was based, and began designing technical gear—cams, carabiners, crampons, ice axes. Many of his inventions, including the Talon, are still widely used.

McLean left Black Diamond a few years ago in order to focus on skiing—a job does get in the way—but he still designs equipment for a number of companies on a freelance basis. When I visited him, he was working on avalanche-safety products and ice-climbing equipment; he was also helping a friend design giant dish antennas for the military. Then there's the money he gets from speeches and from writing for climbing and skiing magazines. Last year, he worked as an avalanche forecaster for the Forest Service but found the job constricting. His superiors disapproved of steep skiing, and he felt called upon to preach a gospel of caution that he did not wholeheartedly subscribe to. Now he pursues what he calls a "low-cost life style." He said, "I haven't heard of any other professional ski mountaineers."

Black Diamond, in the early nineties, was a breeding ground for amateur ski mountaineers, foremost among them Alex Lowe. It was Lowe who introduced McLean to a mode of skiing that employed the tools and techniques of climbing, as European alpinists had been doing for decades. "More than anyone, he opened my eyes to what was possible on skis," McLean said. Their first outing together was to Main Baldy Chute, before Alta opened for the year. They started out at 5 A.M. and descended at dawn, in thigh-deep powder. When they were done, they were set upon by ski patrolmen on snowmobiles, who informed them that the patrol was bombing the chute that morning, to make it slide, and that Lowe and Mclean were lucky not to have been blown to pieces by a Howitzer shell. McLean was hooked.

In a foreword to "The Chuting Gallery," Lowe describes "a loose group of twisted individuals" who several days a week would convene in his kitchen at three in the morning and, to his wife's dismay ("Is this normal!!?"), head off to climb a chute or a peak, then ski down at sunrise and go to work, glowing with accomplishment and stinking of sweat. This regimen, which McLean still adheres to (minus the going-to-work part), was known as dawn patrol.

"You could always spot another chute or two in the distance that needed to be skied," McLean said. "I kept at it for a few years, thinking that I had almost ticked them all off, before realizing that there was no end to them. Some were bigger, steeper, or more classic than others, but there were hundreds of them in the Wasatch and then a few million more around the world."

"The skiing consumed us," Mark Holbrook, a former Black Diamond engineer, told me. "That maybe led to our divorces." (McLean's first marriage, to a graphic designer from Long Island whom he met at RISD, ended eight years ago.)

McLean would like, on his deathbed, to be able to look at a globe and know that he had been everywhere. "It's getting harder and harder to find big classic lines that haven't been skied," he said. "They're a precious commodity." The conquest game can get competitive. Exotic places—the Kamchatka peninsula or Ellesmere Island—catch on, and the athletes pour in. It is difficult to stay ahead of the Scrubbing Bubbles. Sometimes a team spends years planning an expedition to an obscure peak, only to find another team there upon arrival. When I was in Utah, McLean said that he and a nineteen-year-old acolyte named Dylan Freed had recently found a chute in the Wasatch that had never been skied. They had christened it Project Schnozzle. He revealed the location to no one, not even to Polly Samuels. "It takes four hours to get there, and it's only five hundred feet of vertical," he said. "You've got to really want it." Last month, McLean went and did it by himself. "The Schnozzle has fallen," he wrote me.

In 2002, McLean and a Black Diamond sales rep named Brad Barlage journeyed to Baffin Island, west of Greenland, on a hunch that there were chutes there. McLean had built giant kites, based on a Dutch modification of NASA technology (he'd come across some kiting Dutchmen in Antarctica). McLean and Barlage used the kites to sail across the frozen fjords—at speeds of up to forty miles an hour, on skis, towing gear-laden sleds. They discovered soaring chutes everywhere. McLean told me, "We ticked off nineteen first descents, of which ten were the best lines I've ever been in—three-thousand-to-five-thousand-foot screamers that came straight out of the frozen sea ice, surrounded by monstrous walls, stable creamy powder, wolf tracks, twenty-four hours of daylight, and surreal scenery." The skiing magazines took note, and the athletes poured into Baffin.

On a trip like that one, the salient requirements, besides being first and having fun, are imagination and ingenuity, as opposed purely to danger and death-defiance. McLean has learned, he told me, that "fatalities are always a good way to ruin a trip." Holbrook said, "We've toned things down a little. That's a good thing for him, with the problems we've had in the past, with the deaths."

Clearly, the deaths have weighed on McLean. "You go to a funeral," he told me. "You know these people as ski buddies, and you see they have moms and dads and fiancées. It gives it all a human face." And it can give him pause. Thus the toning down. "I'm more conservative, in terms of risking big falls. No more cliff hucking"—skiing off cliffs. "I give avalanches a lot more leeway than I used to," he said. "On the other hand, each thing you ski tends to be a little bit harder. The ambitions keep getting bigger. Foraker may be as hard as anything I've ever done."

On my second morning in Utah, I met McLean in the Little Cottonwood parking lot. He had his pickup truck, on which he had rearranged the lettering of "Toyota" to read "Otto," in honor of his late Bernese mountain dog. He was accompanied by Dylan Freed. McLean had considered taking Freed on the Alaska trip to climb Mt. Foraker, but Freed's uncle, Mark Twight, one of the world's top mountaineers, told McLean, "If anything happens to him and you survive, I'll hunt you down and kill you." ("This kind of raises the question as to why people would get their kids into skiing and the mountains in the first place if they really wanted them to be safe," McLean told me. "Darts might be a better activity.")

On the way up the canyon, we picked up another friend, Lorne Glick, an accomplished ski mountaineer. Glick lives in a sparsely furnished room (ice axes, topographical maps, banjo) inside a small hydroelectric plant just off the Little Cottonwood road. The generators outside the room roar day and night. For money, Glick occasionally drives a Sno-Cat at Alta or works as a guide, and recently, at the age of forty-one, he got a license to be a helicopter pilot.

Our plan was to hike up Mt. Superior, a peak rising three thousand feet above Little Cottonwood Canyon, and ski down the south face, which, viewed from Alta and Snowbird, seemed to be a sheer white wall, studded with cliffs. On earlier trips, I had occasionally seen tracks etched on it and been half glad that they weren't mine. "With slides that cover the road 10-20' deep, Superior should be treated with the utmost respect," McLean writes in "The Chuting Gallery." "Because of the road below, keep in mind that you are endangering others by attempting to ski it in less than ideal conditions." On this particular day, conditions were close to ideal—four inches or so of fresh snow atop a firm, older layer. I decided not to worry about endangering others.

The trail began at Alta, behind the Our Lady of the Snows chapel, an avalanche-proof box of reinforced concrete and plate glass that was built in 1993, ten years after the original chapel, made of wood, was destroyed by a slide. McLean handed me a pair of Whippet Self-Arrest poles, which he designed. They are regular ski poles with a steel ice-axe blade fixed to each handle. You appear to be skiing with two stubby handsaws. In the event of a fall on a

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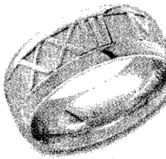

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steep slope, you jab the blades into the snow to stop yourself from sliding. The climb was gradual at first, but it took just three minutes for me to fall well behind. The track was slick. My technique was poor. The air was thin. I huffed my way uphill, doing my best to look around and remind myself that there was no place I'd rather be. The panorama was dazzling in the morning light, like the inside of a diamond; unbroken fields of snow stretched in all directions.

After an hour or so, I rejoined the others at Cardiff Pass, and we started up Superior. Here the skinning got more technical: a winding trail through the trees requiring awkward maneuvers. Again, I lagged; after a while, McLean skied back down to check on me—humbling enough, though he seemed glad for the exercise. After another hour, it was time to remove the skis, strap them to our packs, and start climbing up a narrow ridge leading to the summit. The trail was variable; stretches of thigh-deep drifted snow gave way to wind-cleared rock. Occasionally, there was climbing to do, on all fours; the Whippet blades helped me gain purchase. On my left, there were cliffs, and, on the right, snow-loaded chutes. In places, it was clear that a fall to either side would be highly problematic. The wind had kicked up, and through breaks in a cloud that seemed to have come out of nowhere I got vertiginous glimpses of the valley floor.

McLean, by this point, was waiting for me at the top of each pitch, to make sure that I was all right and to take some delight in the extent to which I wasn't. "You're still smiling," he'd say, to my grimace. After one stretch, when I crawled up onto a narrow shelf and collapsed at his feet, he said, "Nick, does your wife know you're doing this?"

And then we were on top, the slope below us dropping off into a foggy void. Freed and Glick were long gone. They had decided to ski the north side, which looked bright, powdery, and benign. We bundled up, drank water, ate chocolate, and prepared for the ski down. "There's more snow up here than I thought," McLean said. "I think we'll do the chute on the left. Wait up here until I call up to you." He dropped in, traversing back and forth a few times to test the snow—ski cutting, it's called—and then making a series of blocky turns, his wide stance and cautious pace indicating to me that this was no place to make a mistake. And then he disappeared.

I waited awhile in the wind but couldn't hear a thing. Bits of cloud blew past. Rock, cornice, cloud. Probability, complacency, luck. I decided not to wait any longer. I hopped into the wind-whipped snow on the upper face, then chopped my way into a steep, icy trough, intermittently jump-turning and side-slipping, chunks of snow and ice clattering around me like broken glass. When I found McLean, he was hiding behind a rock, a big grin on his face. "Isn't this great?" he said. It was. The pitch eased, and we were making turn after turn in powder. After a while, McLean stopped and pointed up at a steep east-facing shaft. "That's Suicide," he said. He wondered whether I had enough left for one more. The answer, that morning, was no.

"I went ahead and got married without knowing the possible side effects."

Dawn patrol: I met McLean and Brad Barlage in the parking lot at 5 A.M. the following day. We drove up to the White Pine trailhead, donned headlamps, and started skinning up through the woods, a damp malevolent wind howling in the aspen trees. McLean had mercifully assented to a compromise: instead of going all the way up to White Pine, we'd climb for an hour to Pink Pine. The name suggested achievability. We reached the top before first light. Snow had started to fall, spinning in the beams of our headlamps. We skied a run in the trees in darkness—a curious experience. Not feeling right, I continued down alone, while they went up for more.

That evening, I had dinner with McLean and Samuels. They live at the top of a rise in a modest development outside Park City, on the east slope of the Wasatch, giving them a view through fir trees of the Uinta Mountains. The house is compact but spacious—three stories. McLean poured two glasses of

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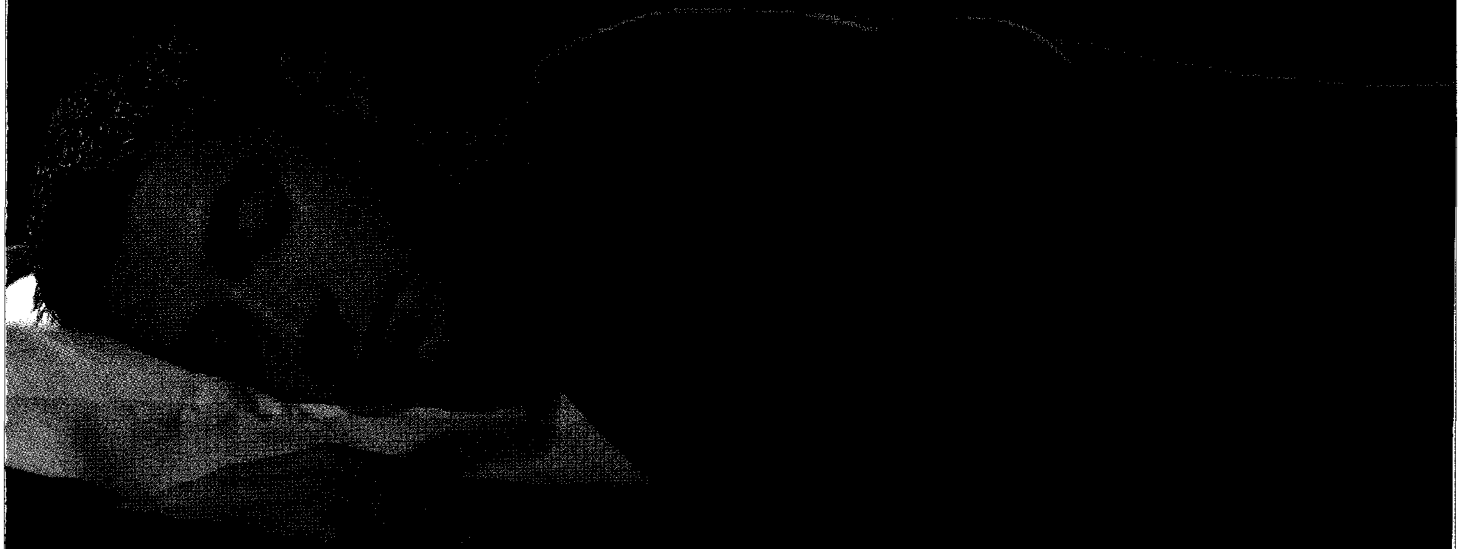

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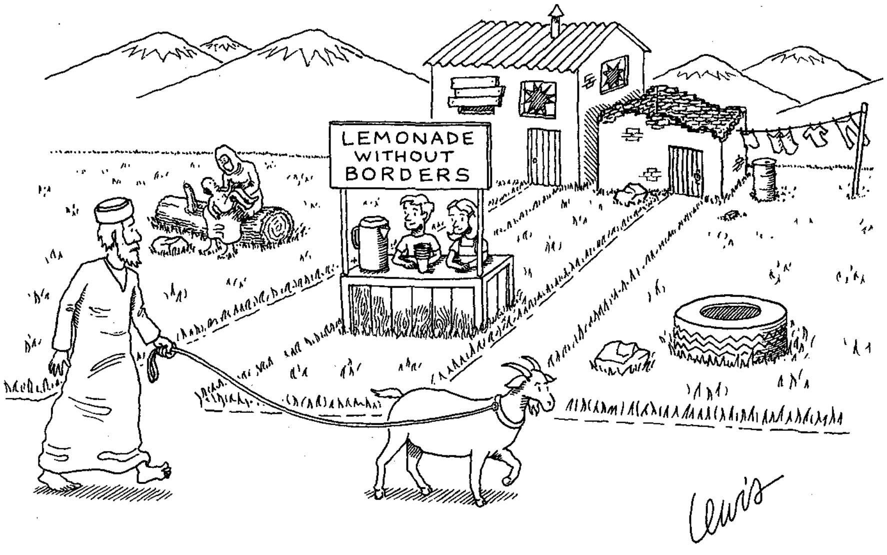
BRITISH AIRWAYS



Scotch and showed me around. The ground floor is dominated by his workshop. It contains twenty-three pairs of skis, as well as climbing skins, boots, bicycles, unicycles, and various heavy mechanical saws and drills. In a closet, neatly arranged, were twenty ice axes and an assortment of helmets and backpacks. Shovels, carabiners, headlamps. Next to the workshop is a sewing room, where he assembles his giant kites. Upstairs, he has an office full of maps and adventure books. He reads a lot; on expeditions, when the weather goes bad, he said, "you end up tearing paperbacks into chapters and passing them around to be read out of order."

When Samuels returned home from work, I remarked upon the neatness of the place. "Did you expect him to be living in some cave?" she asked. She and McLean met in the Little Cottonwood parking lot, when he made a comment about a bumper sticker on her car for a ski-mountaineering mecca in France called La Grave. She loves skiing and understands that he does, too, and so she tolerates the long absences, as well as the risks, though when he talks about them—when, for example, he enumerated some of the obstacles on Mt. Foraker—she laid a hand on his leg, as if to keep him near.

For dinner, McLean made cheese fondue. As he cooked, he talked about some of his avalanche encounters over the years. He told the one about being out on avalanche patrol for the Forest Service, early in the season, and getting caught in a slow slide on a seemingly harmless pitch that buried him head down, so that he couldn't move or breathe. There were incidents in which he was buried up to the waist or thrown up against a tree. "I'm having second thoughts about skiing, suddenly," McLean said, laying the fondue pot on the table.

"I've never heard these stories," Samuels said.

"You haven't?"

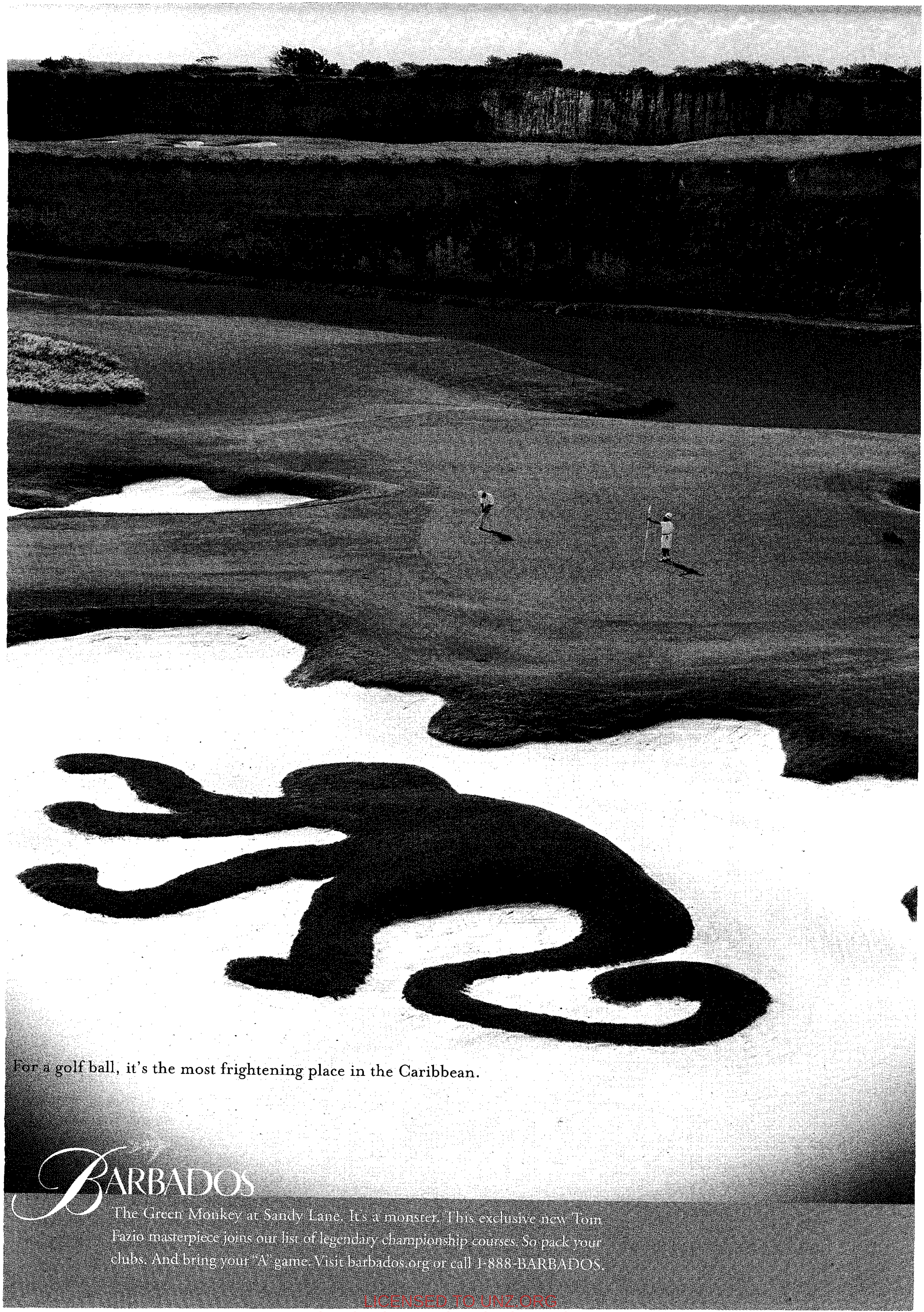
"I guess I never asked."

The more you learn about snow, the clearer it becomes that skiing—in the backcountry, on glaciers, in deep snow, on extreme steeps—is more dangerous than most people who regularly do it acknowledge. The capriciousness of the snow is hard to figure. And, whether it's because of hubris or probability, the victims tend to be those who know their way around the mountains, or believe they do.

"Many people think that the way they do it is safe but that the way others do it isn't," McLean told me. "The only truly safe way of doing it is to stop doing it, which I don't want to do." McLean is not superstitious; he doesn't believe that this frank assessment inoculates him against trouble. But it does enable him to evaluate the risks more soberly. For all his seeming recklessness, he is a compulsive planner and a meticulous performer—a mountain scientist. He admits to having "nighttime fears" and "trip anxiety," but in the end such sensations manifest themselves in preparation and a fixation on gear. (Carabiners "are all about semi-intangible subtleties.") And, where acumen comes up short, he resorts, as most mountain men do, to a kind of fatalism. "I often torment myself with a theoretical question," he said. "What if you knew how and when you were going to die? If it was an avalanche or falling to your death, then you'd have to keep skiing, as you've already seen the end. If it was in your sleep at a ripe old age, then you'd have to keep skiing as well, since you'd know you were safe. The end result is the same: keep making turns." He does have his limits: a few years ago, he took up parapenting—jumping off mountains with a parachute—and decided it was too dangerous.

What suits McLean may not suit others. "People get in trouble trying to be their hero," Bruce Tremper, the director of the Forest Service's avalanche center in Utah, told me. "People got hurt or killed trying to be Alex Lowe. Andrew McLean has taken over that mantle. A lot of people are trying to be Andrew McLean now, and they're getting hurt or killed, because they don't have his talent or experience. Life gives us cheap lessons sometimes."

McLean and Samuels's wedding was held in February at Our Lady of the Snows and presided over by Lou Dawson, a pioneer of North American ski mountaineering and a longtime mentor to McLean. He had managed to get an ordination over the Internet for the occasion. (Dawson, it turns out, knew my aunt Meta, and he himself barely survived a big avalanche behind Aspen Highlands, in 1982.) Many congregants were wearing touring boots and ski clothes. One friend had skinned over from Big Cottonwood Canyon with a tuxedo rolled in his pack. The skiers, bright-eyed, shaggy, ruddy, and lean, stood out among the many guests who had come from New York. They made me think of my grandfather and his fellow-*Skilehrers*, surrounded by Ivy League boys and débutantes. Samuels was brought up in Manhattan; she went to Brearley and Penn; her father, a prominent tax attorney, served as an assistant Treasury secretary in the Clinton Administration, and her mother is a residential real-estate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broker. Eager to partake of the mountain life, Samuels moved out to Salt Lake City in 2000 and insinuated herself into the area's clique of élite outdoorsmen and women by undertaking feats of courage and endurance. (In a toast at the wedding, one of these women said, "We think you have earned the right to marry the icon of the Wasatch.") Also present was Polly's older brother, Colin, who has himself become an avid backcountry skier and climber. He lives in La Grave. Two years ago, his fiancée was killed when she fell down a slope in Norway into a frozen hole. "Polly's parents don't understand it," McLean said. "Colin has moved to one of the centers of alpinism, and Polly is marrying an alpine geek. They're probably not thrilled by it."

McLean and Samuels left the church under an arch of ski poles held aloft by their guests, then put on boots and skis so that they could ski a celebratory run in wedding attire. They took a chairlift, his morning coat and her wedding dress apparently triggering another exemption to the leg-power rule. Afterward, they joined the reception, at a big hotel at Snowbird. The mountain men were scattered about, stooping to stay clear of the potted palms. Bob Athey, the saltiest of them all, sat by the door in his ski gear. He had a rusty beard and a grand frizz of hair, and he smelled of tobacco and sweat. From the way people lined up to talk to him, it was clear that he had not been observed indoors in some time. ("Bob, I haven't seen you since we scattered Alan's ashes," one woman said.) Athey told me, "I figure I got another twenty years of this, before I die in an avalanche."

McLean sidled up. The morning coat looked big on him, as though he were a boy in a man's suit. He had a fixed smile that thinly disguised a groom's simmering embarrassment. "So, Bob, how was the skiing today?"

"It was great."

"Where did you go?"

Athey mentioned some backcountry spots.

"How was the snow?"

"Crusty."

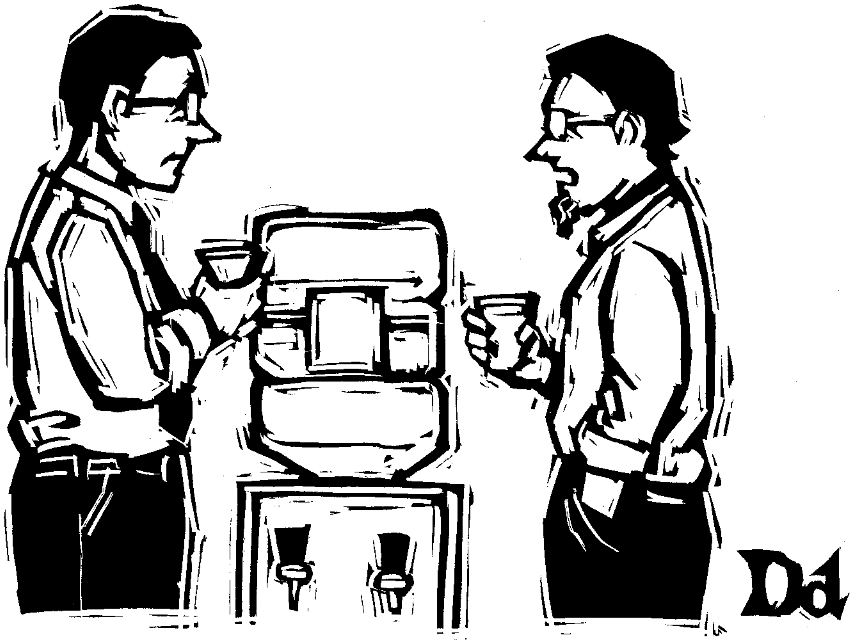
McLean nodded and looked thoughtful for a moment, before his father-in-law came by to suggest that he start herding the guests in to dinner.

After dinner and a short slate of toasts ("And that's how my brother ended up in the position he's in now, with . . . no job!"), it was time for "Hava Nagila." Samuels and McLean were hoisted up and borne onto the dance floor. This being Utah, a good portion of the people holding the bride and groom aloft did not have a great deal of experience with this particular number, and it was hard not to notice, as the tempo sped up and McLean, lurching to and fro, gripped the sides of his chair, that the expression on his face contained an unfamiliar ingredient that you might call worry.

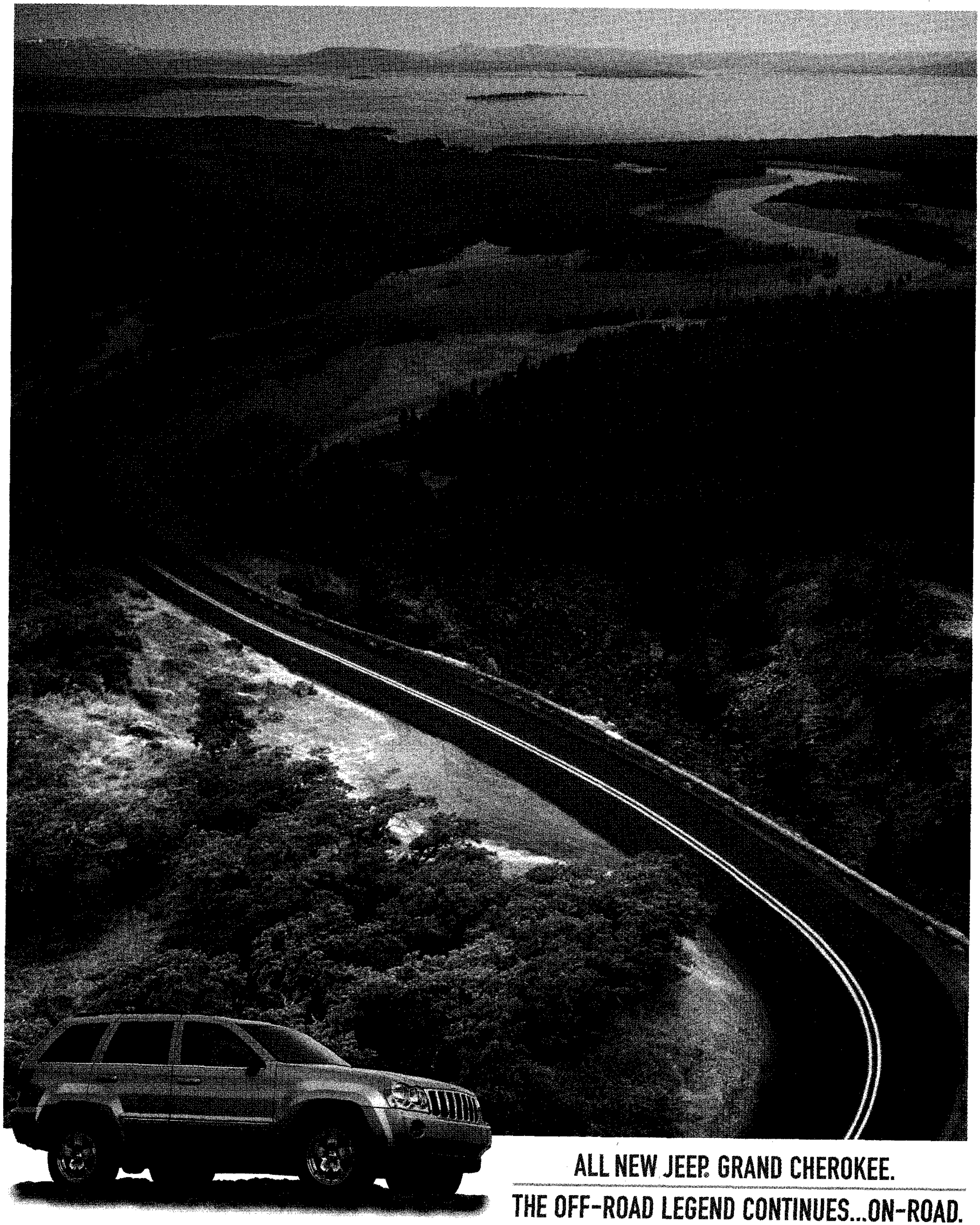
Twenty-four hours after the wedding, I talked to McLean on the phone. I was at Alta, he was at home. (The honeymoon, a trip with friends to a backcountry lodge in British Columbia, would come a few weeks later.) McLean invited me to accompany him and his new brother-in-law on an outing the next morning to the Y Couloir, a three-thousand-foot chute that you walk up in your boots, with crampons and an ice axe. ("The Chuting Gallery": "You will be exposed to avalanche hazards 100 per cent of the time and getting caught in even a minor slide here could be fatal.") I recalled that earlier in the winter McLean had told me that the only expeditions he has ever regretted were the ones he pulled out of: "Whenever I get invited on a trip, I remember a fortune cookie that said, 'Practice saying yes.' " To the Y Couloir invitation, however, I said something about not having the gear and having a plane to catch. McLean told me he had gear for me, and that we'd make it down by noon. "Come on, Nick. You'll love it!" I hung up and talked it over with my wife, with whom I was supposed to ski the following day. The consensus was that the answer should be no. I called McLean back. I told him that it was snowing at Alta, and he remarked that, if more than four or five inches accumulated, the Y Couloir would be too dangerous to ski. Later that evening, I stepped outside and noted, with more than the usual elation, that six inches had fallen. And it was still dumping. I called McLean and gave him my report; the Y Couloir would have to wait.

The next day was a powder day. At Alta, the Scrubbing Bubbles were out in force, devouring the new snow in less than an hour. Riding up the chairlift, I looked back hungrily across the canyon, at the vast untracked south face of Superior, and then followed the ridgeline east, until I saw a lone figure ascending a pristine snowfield. The skin track looked steep, the pace brisk. Ten minutes later, I saw the figure, a tiny speck, reach a peak called Flagstaff. My cell phone rang, and it was McLean, calling from the top to gloat. "Are you lonely?" I asked him.

"It is really good, Nick," he said. "And I have it all to myself." After a moment, he dropped off the backside, out of sight. ♦



"Why don't you come out and join us Tuesday night. We're a group committed to peacefully and nonviolently watching television."



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ARE WE THERE YET?

MY SUMMER IN POLAND

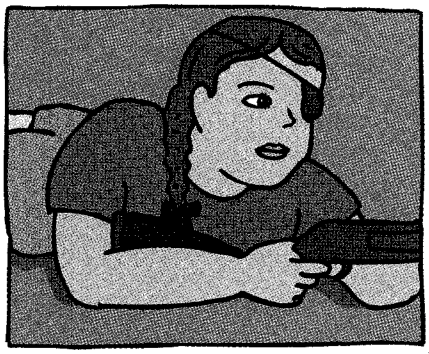
As a child, I had an inexhaustible passion for junk food—at least in theory, since I was never allowed to have it. For this reason, the trip my mother and I took to Pathmark in late June of 1984, when I was nine, stands out like a meteor in an otherwise pitch-black sky. The next day, I was leaving for sleepaway camp, after a year of canvassing my parents with hand-drawn maps of an idealized camp, whose details of lake, bunks, and, of greatest personal interest, canteen I'd gleaned from my older brother.

The only summer camps in our universe were single-sex, situated in Maine, rustic to the point of deprivation, lasted eight weeks, modelled themselves on a martial tradition, and had a strict uniform of white polo shirts, shorts in the camp color, and docksiders. They also required lifelong loyalty and, you could be forgiven for thinking, identification as a Reform or Conservative Jew. After a close study of glossy pamphlets, and at least one slide show beamed onto our living-room wall by a salesperson, we settled on Camp Fernwood, in Poland, Maine.

The food my mother took me to buy that day was to serve a double purpose: sustenance on the ten-hour bus ride, and a farewell luxury before being committed for two months to a place where, as I was soon to learn, possession of any desirable foodstuff resulted in harsh disciplinary action. Foisting all-natural health food on me was practically my mother's raison d'être. So when she unleashed me at the supermarket I took off, trotting down the aisles on legs that had recently been called Ethiopian by a boy at school, and grabbing packages of Cool Ranch Doritos, Devil Dogs, and Entenmann's doughnuts. The lunch bag my mother prepared that night was the largest, most wonderful lunch bag ever to be packed.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

Which is why it remains one of the great tragedies of my childhood that, on the day of my departure, my parents, bickering in the rush to get out the door, forgot the lunch bag, whose doughnuts now, after twenty-one years, have been elevated in my mind to the Platonic ideal of the Doughnut Form. The loss was discovered only at the last minute, in the desolate Yonkers parking lot as my belongings were hurriedly transferred from the car to the bus, in which forty veteran Fernwood campers sat in wait for me. Taking my seat alone at the back, my nose stung with tears that became impossible to hold back as the bus pulled away and my father continued to wave to me, slaloming our enormous Cadillac in and out of traffic alongside the bus, until a red light cut him off.



The loneliness and excruciating hunger I felt on that bus ride didn't abate for the entire summer. Every last inch of the bunks I'd fantasized about was carved or spray-painted with the names of past inmates and the dates of their incarceration, and as soon as my trunk was unpacked I added my own.

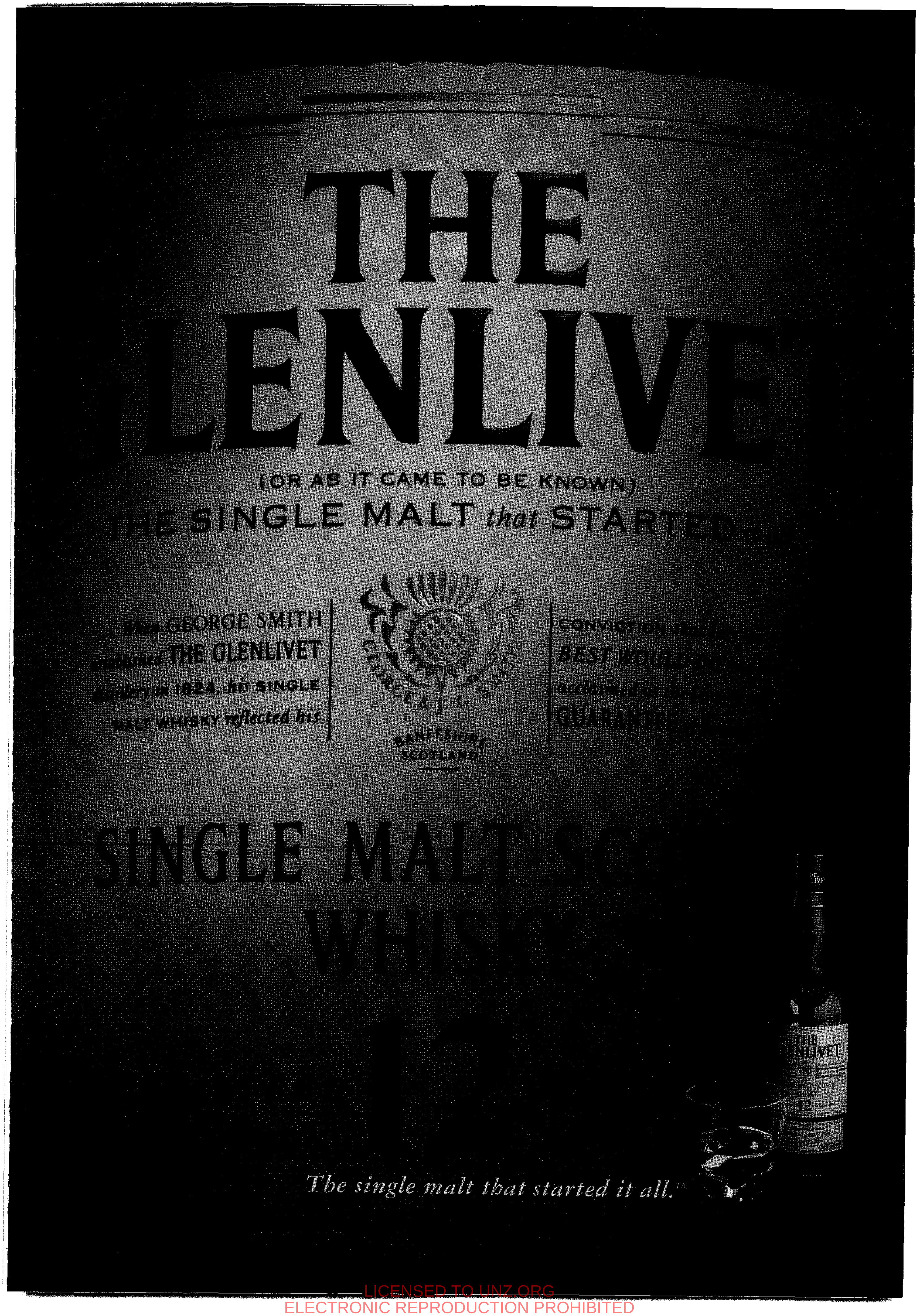
There was nothing to eat. In the rare phone call from my parents that the camp allowed through, I made it clear that they might as well have sent me to Poland, Poland, so dire were the conditions. When their conversations with the camp's owner—first angry, then pleading—didn't result in anything edible, my father tried to send me candy hidden in ingenious ways, once in some tennis balls he'd sliced open and reglued. But the authorities inspected each package by hand and the goods were always discovered and confiscated. On my tenth birthday, my brother called from Camp Kennebec, another lonely Eastern European outpost in Maine, and I missed him so much that even though an emergency condition was developing with my bladder, I refused to get off the phone. Weeping in the phone booth to the sound of the bug zapper, I wet my pants.

Every morning, we woke to reveille played by the head counsellor, the first woman I'd ever seen with sideburns. After breakfast, we had swimming lessons in the freezing lake, rumored to be populated by snapping turtles, followed by a rigorous schedule of those other popular Jewish sports: sailing, windsurfing, horseback-riding, and archery.

I smothered my misery with rifle practice. Each afternoon, wearing underwear into which my mother had sewn my name, I jogged down to the shabby range on the edge of the camp. I learned to fire a gun lying down on a thin mattress, one eye covered with a black leather patch. An ugly bruise bloomed on my right shoulder from the recoil, but with each passing week my aim became more precise, and by the end of July I'd been decorated with every medal the counsellor could find in the ten-and-under category.

On the morning of visiting day, with my hair done in two French braids, I waited for my parents at the top of the hill, wearing the eye patch. They were among the last parents to appear, and they came lugging a replica of the lost lunch bag. I can't remember now what was in it.

—*Nicole Krauss*



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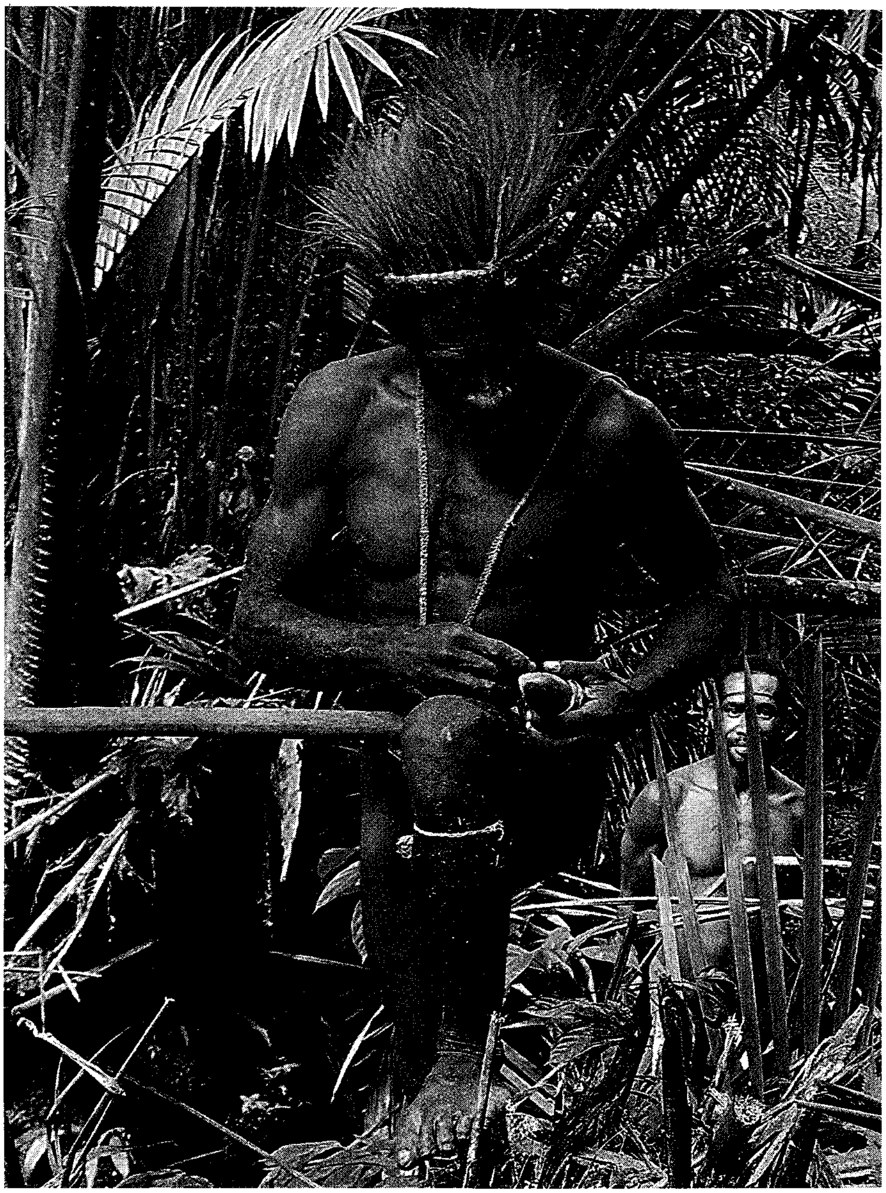
LETTER FROM NEW GUINEA

STRANGERS IN THE FOREST

Contacting an isolated people—on a guided tour.

BY LAWRENCE OSBORNE



A member of the Kombai tribe, in Papua, mending an axe near his tree house.

COURTESY LAWRENCE OSBORNE

The jungle canopy below us was suddenly ruptured by a rectangular clearing not much longer than a suburban lawn. This was the airstrip for Wanggemalo, a tiny village in the Indonesian province of Papua, which is the western half of New Guinea. The six-seat plane carrying our tour group, which had been chartered from Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries, began a rapid descent. At the end of the airstrip, a few dozen members of the Kombai tribe waited patiently for this rare arrival. They were half-dressed, in hand-me-down clothes, and their arms were filled with arrows carved from sugarcane and bundles of limp yellow flowers. Their hair was fluffed with chicken feathers, and their thin black legs were spattered with toffee-colored mud.

The wheels touched down on the crudely cut grass, and the plane came to a stop. Georg Decristoforo and Theresia Ellinger, a couple in their fifties from the Austrian Tyrol, climbed out first. They were followed by a young blond Finn named Juha. All were scientists. Georg and Theresia were chemical engineers with Sandoz, the pharmaceutical company; Juha worked for a small company outside Helsinki that designed software for the European Space Agency. They greeted the Kombai with awkward waves and smiles.

I emerged from the plane along with Kelly Woolford, our American tour guide. It was early morning; a low mist hovered over ancient ferns and tufts of flowering ginger. Starting at dawn the next day, Woolford was to lead us on a two-week trek deep into the surrounding rain forest. Woolford, who lives in Bali, runs Papua Adventures, a small company that specializes in treks through the wildest zones of Papua. Although he has a degree in criminology from Drury University, in Springfield, Missouri, he resembles an American backwoodsman of centuries past, with shoulder-length blond hair, a greyhound physique, and a rural Missouri accent. Woolford takes three or four small groups into the jungle each year. The trip, which costs several thousand dollars per person, is not for the timid: the forest terrain is punishing and remote, and there are few comforts or safeguards.

The goal of our expedition was to meet forest-dwelling Kombai who had never seen this airstrip—people who knew little or nothing of modern civilization. Many Kombai, Woolford had told us, do not live in villages. Single families build tree houses high in the forest canopy, with the aim of protecting themselves from potential enemies. There are dozens of such tree houses in the jungle; some of them had been visited by Westerners, Woolford said, and others had not. "We're going to find Kombai who may never have even heard of white people, let alone seen any," he told us. "You'll see that *look* in their eyes."

The fantasy of a "first contact" encounter has lured a steady trickle of Westerners to Papua, whose interior rain forests are nearly devoid of towns, roads, and other signs of modernity. Every year, a few dozen tourists visit this jungle region, either with Woolford or with a rival company such as Primitive Destinations International. The region has a reputation for

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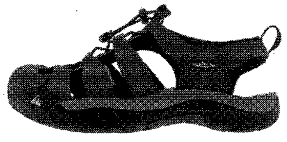

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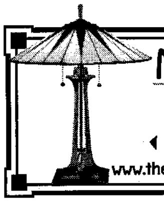

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being dangerous, and this keeps it from being besieged by travellers. "It's the last wild place left," Woolford likes to say. "The last untamed place." Brazil also has isolated native populations, he acknowledges, but the Amazon is rapidly being infiltrated by prospectors and farmers. Papua's interior feels cloistered by comparison.

Tourists who sign up for Woolford's expeditions are looking for something simultaneously subtle and extreme. They want a brief, nonintrusive encounter with fragile and isolated peoples, much the way ecotourists attempt to observe endangered jungle wildlife without disturbing the animals' delicate habitat. Such an adventure sounds voyeuristic, but Woolford had promised that we would not feel like gawkers. "We're not going to be leering at the Kombai from behind a glass window," he said. "We'll be their guests."

We put on our backpacks and began climbing a nearby hill. It was a hundred degrees in the shade, and our feet kept sinking into the muddy forest floor. Pandanus trees loomed over us like towering ruins. Several Kombai followed without pestering us, silently showing off their wares. Their elegant arrows were barbed like Gothic spires and whitened at the tips. They did not sweat in the heat, though butterflies and sweatflies swirled around their heads.

At the top of the hill stood an abandoned missionary house, where we were to spend the night. In the early nineteen-eighties, Dutch missionaries made contact with some Kombai. A church and a Christian school were built in Wanggemalo, but almost no converts had been made. Inside the house, calendars from 1994 still decorated the walls, along with children's drawings illustrating the story of Noah's ark. Outside, there was a large veranda where we could sit in moldy cane chairs; an unused baptismal font nearby was beginning to crumble.

As the light faded, we congregated on the veranda, and, once again, villagers quietly gathered around us. Women, wearing bushy skirts made of sago fibre, hovered on one side; men, some of whom were dressed only in white penis gourds made from hornbill beaks or halved acorn nuts, stood on the other. They stared at our cigarettes and lighters. After a while, the men came up to shake our hands—fingers barely grazing—murmuring "*Nari*," Kombai for "father." The women were shyer; only a few ventured a greeting.

The village chief of Wanggemalo was named Brimob. A tiny, toothless man in a blackened bomber jacket, he strode up to the veranda with a group of younger men. Brimob, Woolford said, had become the leader many years earlier, after he shot an Indonesian officer through the eye with an arrow. (Indonesian mobile-police units are called Brimob.) Woolford explained that Brimob's men wanted to travel into the forest with us as porters. He then introduced us to an amiable middle-aged man named Yanbu, a Kombai who spoke rudimentary Bahasa Indonesia, the official language of Indonesia. Woolford speaks Bahasa well, and Yanbu would serve as his translator and guide in the forest. With Yanbu's help, Woolford selected twenty-five porters from the assembled youths. Many of them had missionary names. My porter was named Stephanus; there was even a Judas.

Lightning flashed over the tops of the pandanus trees. "Where are we, Jurassic Park?" Georg said. He trained his binoculars on the trees, which, surprisingly, contained no monkeys. He had dark cropped hair and spectacles, and a youthful enthusiasm. He alone had brought a global-positioning device, along with the latest camping gadgets.

"The end of the world," Woolford responded in a murmur. The Kombai knew him well—he had visited this town dozens of times—and they were extraordinarily affectionate with him, holding him in their arms, pinching him, and murmuring "Kelly, Kelly, Kelly."

Georg, Theresia, Juha, and I felt self-conscious returning the stares of the Kombai, and so we focussed on each other. Theresia was sturdy and intolerant of nonsense, with ruddy high-Alpine cheekbones; looking at her powerful hands, you knew that they knew how to tie complicated knots or tent lines. At one point, I asked her what her favorite pastime was, and she responded, somewhat sternly, "*Vinter* mountaineering." That, and trekking in Nepal. I told her that mine was drinking wine.

"Ah, a city boy!" she said, shaking her head and looking at me as if I were doomed.

Juha, in his thirties, was closer to me in age. For us, this trip was a singular adventure. He was coolly skeptical, with cornflower-blue eyes that

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"Who would have thought a stretch mark cream would turn out to be the anti-wrinkle breakthrough of the decade!"

In a remarkable turn of events, arguably one of the strangest in the history of cosmetics, women across the country are putting a stretch-mark cream called StriVectin-SD® on their face to diminish the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles and crows' feet. And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, StriVectin-SD is nothing short of a miracle. Women (as well as a growing number of "Boomer" men) are buying so much StriVectin-SD that finding a tube at your local cosmetic counter has become just about impossible. Has everyone gone mad? Well... not really.

Scientific Breakthrough or Dumb Luck?

Although StriVectin-SD's functional components were already backed by clinical trials documenting their ability to visibly reduce the appearance of existing stretch marks (prominent because of their depth, length, discoloration, and texture)... the success of StriVectin-SD as an anti-wrinkle cream was "dumb luck," says Gina Gay, spokesperson for Klein-Becker®, StriVectin-SD's exclusive distributor.

"When we first handed out samples of the StriVectin formula to employees and customers as part of our market research, the sample tubes were simply marked 'topical cream' with the lot number underneath," Ms. Gay explains. "As the samples were passed to friends and family, the message became a little muddled and some people used this 'topical cream' as a facial moisturizer. As we began to receive feedback from users, like 'I look 10 years younger' and 'I can't even notice my crows' feet,' we knew we had something more than America's most effective stretch-mark cream. The point was driven home as store owners began reporting that almost as many people were purchasing StriVectin as an anti-wrinkle cream as were buying it to reduce stretch marks."

Dr. Daniel B. Mowrey, PhD, Klein-Becker's Director of Scientific Affairs, says, "Clearly, people were seeing results, but we didn't have a scientific explanation as to why this wrinkle-reduction was occurring. However, based on the incredibly positive reports, I started using it myself — applying StriVectin to my face after shaving." Dr. Mowrey adds, "On a personal note, my wife tells me I haven't looked this good in years."

Dumb Luck Strikes Again!

Then, on Tuesday, July 2, 2002, at a meeting of the 20th World Congress of Dermatology in Paris, France, a series of studies detailing the superior wrinkle-reducing properties of a patented oligo-peptide (called Pal-KTTKS) versus retinol, vitamin C, and placebo, on "photo-aged skin" was presented.[1,2] "As luck would have it," Dr. Mowrey states, "the anti-wrinkle oligo-peptide tested in the breakthrough clinical trials turned out to be a key ingredient in the StriVectin cream."

In the trials, subjects applied the patented peptide solution to the crows' feet area on one side of the face, and a cream containing either retinol, vitamin C, or a placebo to the other side.

Subjects in the Pal-KTTKS/retinol study applied the cream once a day for 2 months and then twice a day for the next 2 months. Using special image analysis, the study's authors reported "significant improvement" in the appearance of both overall skin tone and unsightly wrinkles for those women using the peptide solution.

Better yet, at the 2-month halfway point, the peptide solution worked nearly 1.5 times faster than retinol (in measured parameters), and without the inflammation retinol often causes in sensitive skin. As was expected, the results of the remaining studies confirmed that the Pal-KTTKS *solution's effectiveness* at reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles far exceeded both vitamin C and placebo.

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Dr. Nathalie Chevreau, PhD, RD, Director of Women's Health at Salt Lake City based Basic Research®, exclusive distributor for Klein-Becker, explains, "Leading dermatologists agree that Botox is the preferred treatment for moderate to severe frown lines between the brow. But ever since it was discovered that StriVectin could reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, and crows' feet... the kind of fine lines, wrinkles and crows' feet that can add 10-15 years to your appearance and which costly medical treatments often leave behind... skin-care professionals have been recommending, and using, StriVectin." In fact, researchers believe non-invasive alternatives are better, because, Dr. Chevreau continues, "Topical creams and gels offer gradual, continual results, while the effects of injections, facial peels, and dermabrasions are rougher on the skin and wear off."

In other words, StriVectin-SD helps give you a youthful, healthy, glowing complexion faster than retinol, far superior to vitamin C, and without irritation, needles, or surgery. Even better, many dermatologists and plastic surgeons recommend StriVectin in conjunction with cosmetic procedures, including Botox.

So, if you see someone applying an anti-stretch mark cream to their face, don't think they've gone off the deep end... they may be smarter than you think.

Having a hard time finding StriVectin-SD®?

If you've been searching for StriVectin-SD, you already know it's become almost impossible to find. Don't bother with Neiman Marcus, they don't have it... Your best bets are SEPHORA shops, PARISIAN, Lord & Taylor, bloomingdales, macy's way to shop or Saks 5th Avenue (they always try to keep it in stock) or, believe it or not, the pregnancy section of your local GNC or high-end supplement retailer. To be absolutely sure, you can order StriVectin-SD directly from Klein-Becker at:

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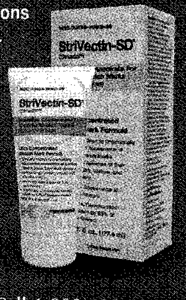
or order online at

www.StriVectin.com.

Since StriVectin-SD was designed as a stretch-mark reducing formula, it comes in a large, 6-ounce tube. At $135.00, StriVectin-SD is not cheap... but when used as a wrinkle-reducer, one tube will last approximately six months. By the way, StriVectin-SD is backed by Klein-Becker's money-back guarantee. If StriVectin-SD doesn't make your skin look younger, healthier, and more vibrant, simply return the unused portion within 30 days for a full refund... no questions asked.



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Study References:

[1] PO438 "Relevance of antiwrinkle treatment of a peptide: *4 months clinical double blind study vs excipient.*" 20th World Congress of Dermatology (60 subjects, 4 mos.)

[2] PO179 "Pentapeptide offers improvement in human photoaged facial skin." 20th World Congress of Dermatology (204 subjects, 14 weeks)

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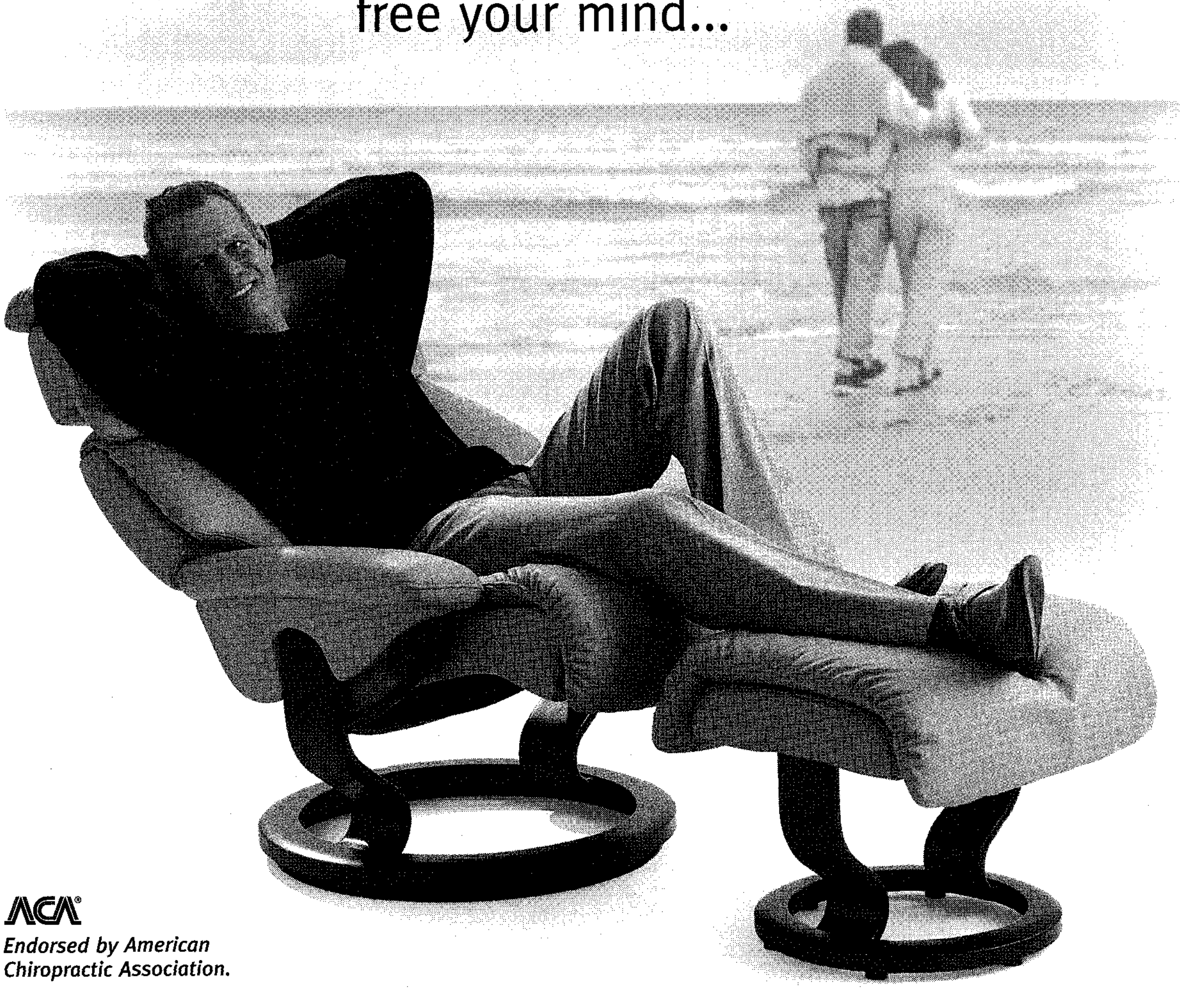

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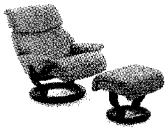

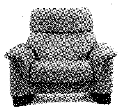

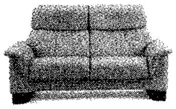

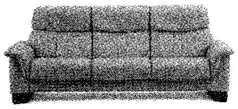

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IN IOWA

In Iowa once, among the Mennonites
In a slathering blizzard, conveyed all afternoon
Through sleet-milt pelting hard against the windscreen
And a wiper's strong absolving slumps and flits,

I saw, abandoned in the open gap
Of a field where wilted cornstalks flagged the snow,
A mowing machine. Snow brimmed its iron seat,
Heaped each spoked wheel with a thick white brow,

And took the shine off oil in the black-toothed gears.
Verily I came forth from that wilderness
As one unbaptized who had known darkness
At the third hour and the veil in tatters.

In Iowa once. In the slush and rush and hiss
Not of parted but as of rising waters.

—*Seamus Heaney*

looked perpetually distant and bemused.

We eventually fell to discussing our reasons for coming to New Guinea, and found ourselves rambling about "curiosity," "dissatisfaction," "boredom," a desire to see "something different."

"I maybe thought that the Kombai would teach me something," Juha said. "I'm not sure what. But life is made of romantic ideas." He nodded toward the Kombai standing there in the dark. "Or maybe not so romantic," he murmured.

The romanticization of primitive life is one of the persistent tropes in the history of Western thought. In 1755, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, "Nothing is more gentle than man in his primitive state." After Captain Cook visited the South Sea Islands, in the mid-eighteenth century, Enlightenment thinkers argued that the truth of human nature could now finally be revealed by an empirical study of primitive societies. Denis Diderot argued that primitive cultures like that of Tahiti were joyful because they were sexually free, unburdened by the artifice of civilization. Primitives, Diderot argued, were spiritually healthy and robust, and, as such, they were a devastating mirror held up to us.

I asked Juha how it felt to be spending the evening with men in penis gourds.

"I don't know," he said quietly. "I feel extreme weirdness, I suppose."

"Are you unnerved?"

"Not unnerved, but a bit uneasy."

We speculated how the forest-dwelling Kombai might react to seeing white people. The anthropological literature on the Kombai is extremely limited, and it's impossible to confirm Woolford's assertion that most of the tribe's forest dwellers are ignorant of the modern world. James Bourk Hoesterey, a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, who has worked with the neighboring Korowai people, says, "I think that there might be a few remaining communities in Papua who have managed to dodge centuries of Chinese bird-hunters, Dutch colonial officials, Indonesian military expeditions, Western tourists, Indian sandalwood traders, and American miners and missionaries." As recently as 1998, Reuters reported that two new tribes, the Aukedate and the Vahudate, had been discovered by missionaries in Papua. But Hoesterey cautioned, "I wouldn't call such tribes 'uncontacted.' These peoples are indeed caught up in modernity, even if they haven't actually seen a white tourist before." Perhaps they had engaged in trade, or seen tire tracks in the mud.

In the darkness, two shadowy figures were heading swiftly toward us. "And who is that?" Theresia asked Woolford.

A raffish-looking adolescent with wild eyes walked onto the veranda; he was closely followed by an older man in a shaggy green jacket. We asked Yanbu, the translator, to explain. The teen-ager, it turned out, had been accused by fellow-villagers of being a demon in human form. The Kombai call such a spirit a *kakua*. As a test, the youth would be forced to eat a live frog, pig shit, and human excrement. If he vomited, he would be declared innocent. If not, a grim fate awaited him. A *kakua* is typically killed and cut into four parts; each section is then buried in a separate spot in the forest. The victim's viscera are sometimes cooked on hot stones and eaten.

"Is he *really* a witch?" Juha asked urbanely.

Woolford chuckled. It was dark now. He warned us that the Kombai in the jungle might not always know we were entirely human; with our strange pale skin, we certainly didn't look human. On our trek, it would be wise to wash as little as possible, avoiding shampoo and shaving products, for the forest people might consider chemical smells to be the sign of a *kakua*. "We don't want them freaking out, do we?" Woolford said, winking.

At dawn, the porters formed a column a quarter-mile long. They carried weapons, tent bags, cooking supplies, and food. They sang and twanged bamboo Jew's harps. Penus, our improbably named cook, laughed so loud that birds flew away.

It was soon raining hard. Wanggemalo is surrounded by dense swamps, acres of thick slime which can be traversed only by walking across fallen logs. Soaked, and covered in a toxic mixture of sweat, insect repellent, and black mud smelling of fermenting beer—a result of rotting sago-palm trees—we jumped from one log to another, teetering like high-wire artists without poles. I was the slowest, the most buffoonish, and Yanbu stopped frequently to let me catch up, a faint look of pity on his face. A little over five feet and probably not past forty, Yanbu wore a pair of surfer shorts, a dapper dog-tooth necklace, and rubber galoshes. A large wok was balanced on his head. He had become savvy about Western manners: when I looked at my photographs later, I noticed that Yanbu was the only Kombai who smiled at the camera.

Yanbu had relatives dispersed throughout the jungle, which facilitated his role as ambassador. There was a precise protocol for visiting Kombai tree houses, Woolford explained. A few porters would be sent to the tree house the day before we arrived, acting as emissaries and offering gifts of tobacco. (Many Kombai love smoking, though they usually puff on raw leaves.) If the men in the tree houses liked the tobacco and permission was granted for us to enter the premises, we would approach the place, with Yanbu in the lead. There would probably be an initial display of force, a tense standoff as the Kombai assessed the strangers.

By midday, we had left the swamps and entered the forest. The canopy blocked out the sky. Thorny vines sporadically dropped down from on high, scratching our faces. On the forest floor, near-invisible trails ran like silken threads. They led from tree house to tree house, and the Kombai walked these paths with unconscious assurance. Yanbu didn't know all the tree houses in this immense forest, he told Woolford, but he knew those where his kin lived.

The forest grew increasingly monotonous: dark-green carallia trees, tunnels of rattan. Very rarely, a cream-white orchid sprouted out of a tree. The other tourists and I stumbled through muddy ravines as slippery as glass. The Kombai, by contrast, navigated the forest effortlessly, like fish darting through coral. Frustration began to well up in me, for in nature the "civilized" man quickly becomes a helpless child, dependent upon people we have been conditioned to think of as helpless children.

At the end of the afternoon, we heard Yanbu, far ahead of us, yodelling into the forest. We were close to the first tree house. After a moment, we heard similar cries in response. We all fell silent.

Woolford told our group that he had taken an English investment banker along this same trail the year before. This tree house, therefore, would not be a pure first contact. It didn't matter: the scene was surreal enough. We were at the edge of a sun-flooded clearing piled with the debris of hundreds of shattered trees. It looked like the site of a meteor strike, without the crater. At its center rose a gabled thatch house on sixty-foot-high stilts. Its walls, of bamboo, were covered with shields painted white and ochre. The roof was festooned with mouse skulls. It swayed in the wind, smoke puffing out of its door. Below it stood a naked man, his bow drawn.

The man began creeping toward us, a look of anxiety on his face. His sugarcane arrow was three feet long, finely carved, and painted with white bands. In one hand he held a kind of sandwich, made of sago stuffed with fat white beetle grubs, which burrow inside sago trees. A "sago burger," Juha called it later.

Yanbu pulled out a plastic bag of Indonesian tobacco. Georg suddenly volunteered to carry it over. Yanbu looked at Woolford, who nodded.

Even from a distance, we could see that the naked man was trembling and scared. Georg reached out to touch his hand. The Kombai man extended his, shaking violently, then quickly withdrew it and shook his head. They tried again. The fourth time, their hands brushed, and the tension subsided. The Kombai man straightened up, loosened his bow, and poked into the bag of tobacco. Quite unexpectedly, he smiled, showing a line of rotten teeth. "*Nari,*" he said.

We stepped forward, half-whispering "*Nari, nari, nari*" and passing our hands over his. Our antagonist turned charmingly gracious. He pointed at our genitals and said, "*Ringi bungkus*?" This caused a moment's confusion until Yanbu offered Woolford a translation: "Shall we wrap your penises?"

It was, we gathered, a friendly overture, though we politely declined.

Two families lived here, we learned. Behind the tree house was a dark, tea-colored river. The porters pitched our tents along its banks. In minutes, they had also assembled a crude table and benches out of branches and bamboo twine—a miracle of forest engineering that they repeated every night. Nearby, on the ground, there was another small house, where the women slept. (Only men sleep in Kombai tree houses.)

Georg, Juha, and I swam naked in the cold little river. I asked Georg how he had felt handing over the tobacco. "Well, I could see the whole thing was ceremonial in some way," he said. "But the look in his eye—it was incredible. I've never seen a look like that. I don't even know what emotion it was. At first, I thought terror. But it was more complex than that."

"Paralysis?"

"I don't know what to think."

"But he's seen a white man before," Juha said. Nevertheless, the man's astonishment had been genuinely volatile.

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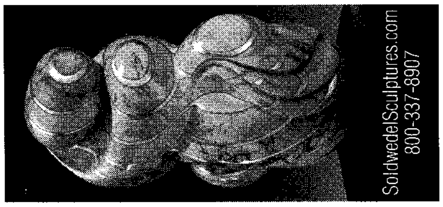
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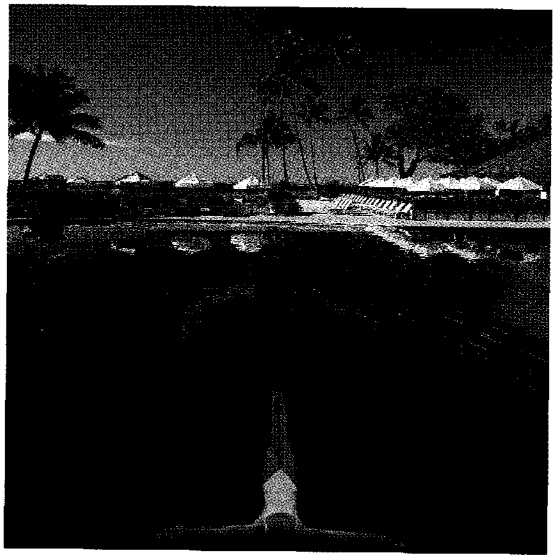

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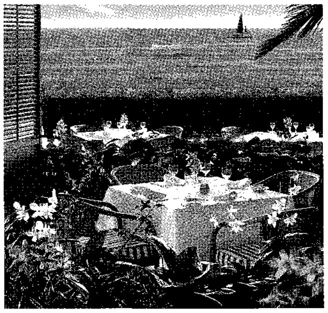

Orchids restaurant

The Halekulani pool

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All guests receive bowls of fresh fruit on their arrival, handmade chocolates, and turndown service. No matter the room or suite, Halekulani is an otherworldly place, one that more than lives up to the meaning behind its name, a "house befitting heaven."

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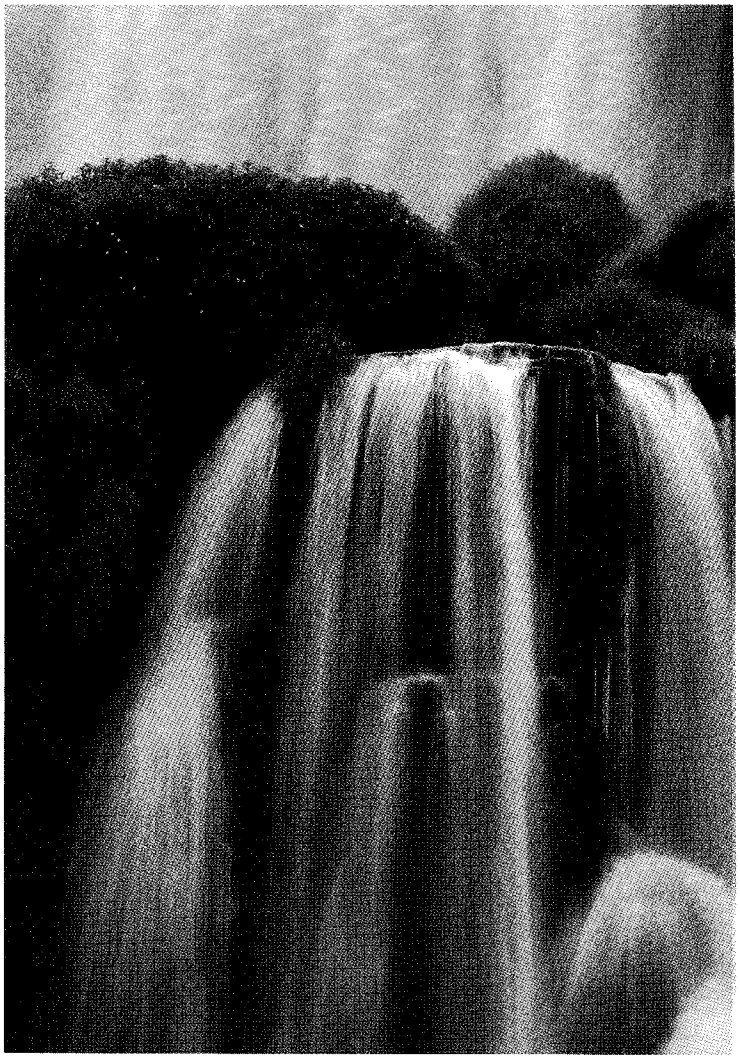

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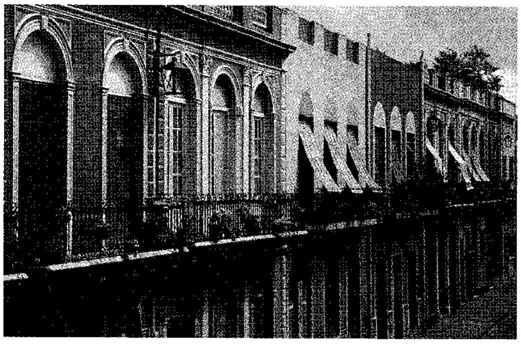

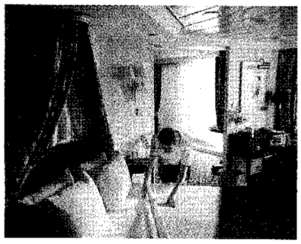

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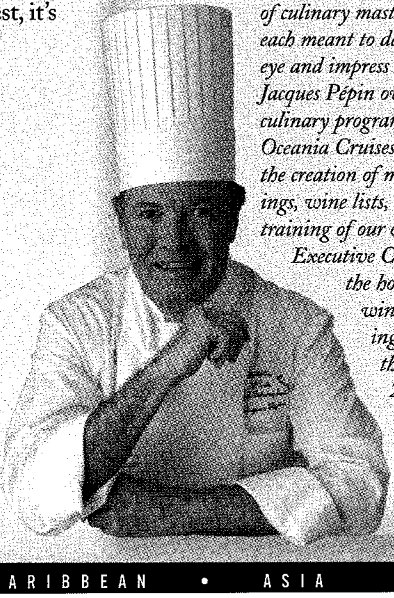

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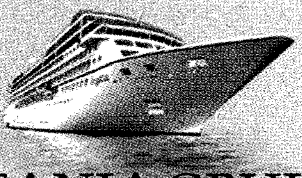

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"Did you see his knees shake?" I said.

"I wonder if he would have killed me if I had done something unexpected," Georg said, a bit melodramatically. Brilliant lemon butterflies sat absurdly on his head. His beard, unshaved for several days, was now darkening his face and, as with all of us, his hair was getting a little wild. He had a persistent, childlike curiosity, and this trip to New Guinea seemed to be the outgrowth of a sixties-era romanticism. He expressed concern that the Kombai might one day be inundated by tourism. "The sad thing is, nothing remains unknown forever," he said.

At dusk, we set up candles on the table. We were soon assaulted by mosquitoes, which bear a potent strain of malaria. Wild-animal yells echoed through the forest. Without warning, two men emerged from the trees. They had daintily chiselled bodies; cassowary feathers were woven into their hair, and mouse tails were tied around their heads. Saying nothing, they glided past us, lighting their way with a sheaf of burning grass. When they noticed the hard, lucid flames of the candles, however, they stopped and lingered. Eventually, they shook our hands, and I saw that white ringworm coated their shoulders. Disconcertingly, they kept sniffing us.

The Noble Savage, in tune with nature, is a durable myth. But some of the forest Kombai looked sick to me; they were continually coughing, as if they all had bad colds. Yet they didn't seem gloomy. During the night, I woke in my tent. The porters had made a fire, and it flickered against the trees. The night was filled with a surprising amount of laughter, and somewhere nearby a man was singing, a ripple of vowels and tones that must have been thousands of years old.

The following day, Georg and Theresia, taking out reference books and binoculars, scanned the forest canopy with scrupulous academic vigor. They were admirable jungle companions: tough, stoic, and perceptive. At one point, Theresia, a keen bird-watcher, pointed out the world's most imposing pigeon, which is endemic to New Guinea. And after hours of harsh bushwhacking Theresia finally spotted a rare lizard, an emerald tree monitor, which scuttled so high up a tree that the naked eye couldn't detect it. "*Schön!*" she exclaimed, as the porters began scampering up after it on liana straps. "A beauty!"

Theresia followed the porters' progress through the binoculars as they climbed into the canopy. Suddenly, the lizard hit the forest floor with a thud. "Oh dear," she moaned, turning pale.

The youths jumped on the dazed reptile and gaily beat out its brain with sticks. Holding it up by its tail, they showed it off—a huge, three-foot specimen with jewel-like markings—while blood dripped from its tongue. This would be their dinner, it appeared. Theresia picked up her walking stick and moved on. I imagined her indignation and even rage. The island's beautiful parrots proved a still more anguishing problem. The porters liked them roasted on spits. What to the educated Westerner is a marvel of nature to be catalogued in a digital camera is to the Kombai a wood-smoked snack.

The forest remained sullen and densely meshed. At our feet, pink pitcher plants yawned upward, like open mouths. Yanbu sliced through barbed vines and ancient ferns with a machete. We slithered along fallen trees, stopping in the rivers to drench ourselves and refill our water bottles, shaking them up with iodine tablets. In a clearing near a stream, the porters suddenly dispersed and loaded their arrows: one of them had spotted a deadly taipan snake.

After seven hours, we reached the next tree house. It was lofty, with grand views over the forest, but it felt suffocatingly isolated. That night, over a meal of musky brush-turkey eggs, we asked two elder Kombai men living there about their myths. The men were reticent, but they did recount a Kombai creation myth. Human beings were once as tiny as grubs, they said, and they lived inside a large woven bag, high up in a tree house. They were fed sago until one day, having grown big, they spilled out of the bag, eventually coming down from the primordial tree house to the earth.

I asked the men if they knew where we came from.

"We don't know," one of the men said.

"We don't come from the forest," Woolford said, through Yanbu. "We come from outside the forest."

At this, the men shook their heads.

I asked them about their neighbors, the Korowai.

"We don't know them," they said flatly.

During all this, they stared obsessively

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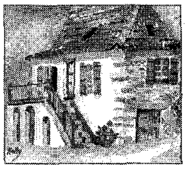

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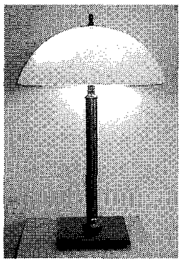

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at a candle on the table. A candle's brilliant light is totally different from a campfire's dull orange, and it dazzled them. "It burns, but it doesn't go out," one man observed meekly to Yanbu. The men clicked a finger behind their front teeth, a gesture that translates as "Wow!"

Later, lying half-conscious in my tent, I watched the pulsating silhouettes of praying mantises crawling over it. A terrifying bright-pink spider the size of my hand suddenly ran across the floor. I could hear laughter again and, for the first time, I felt a surge of ecstasy. I revelled in my survival in the face of the jungle's innumerable dangers.

In the morning, however, I awoke to a hideous breakfast. Our hosts brought us a large plate piled high with tiny roasted legs, so small that we had to eat about thirty of them to satisfy our hunger. They had a vile taste, a cross between stale pork and licorice.

"A rare treat," Yanbu informed us jovially. "Mouse legs!"

The following morning, however, Yanbu was tense. He told Woolford that the next tree house was going to be more difficult to approach. Several families, he had learned, would be gathering at the house that evening for a pig feast. (Some porters who had been sent ahead had returned with this news.) The feast was, in some ways, a political gesture: recently, a young man living in the area, suspected of being a *kakua*, had been murdered. The clan needed to heal the rift among its members, and the feast would be a sign of unity. But the intrusion of strangers had not been anticipated, and it was not clear that we would be welcome.

We set off once more. There was a bend in the trail as it rose toward a high crest denuded of trees. As we neared the top, cries of greeting shot back and forth. This time, it was my turn to offer the tobacco. We could tell that these Kombai were excited, perhaps agitated, by our presence; their cries seemed a little hysterical.

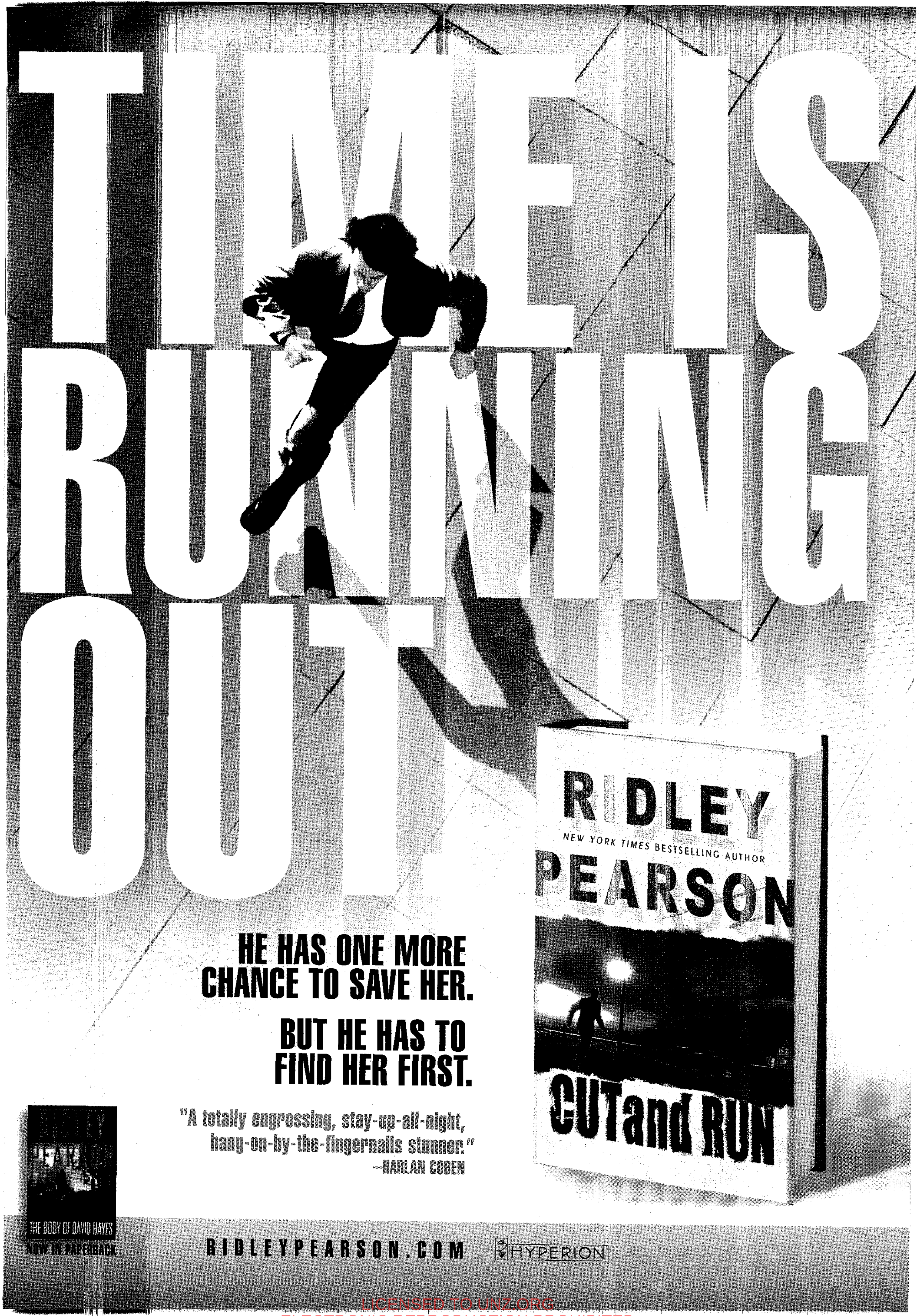
I nervously walked forward into the clearing, carrying Indonesian shag tobacco. There were two magnificent tree houses, far taller than the others that we had seen. In front of me were some twenty men, their bows sullenly drawn. I kept advancing, pacing myself like a man on a tightrope. My feet crunched on burned twigs in the grass; the sound seemed as loud as firecrackers. At the same time, the shouts of the men, who were now closing in on me, felt oddly muted. I suddenly wondered if all this was an elaborate mise-en-scène that Woolford and Yanbu had quietly arranged. (On the coast, I knew, tourists were often treated to staged primitivist spectacles; locals would dance naked for a few hours each night before hitting the neighborhood bar.) I am not an anthropologist and was not equipped to judge the authenticity of this encounter. I knew nothing about these people. Yet the experience felt real.

Suddenly, as I was moving slowly forward, an arrow flew over my head with a crisp whoosh. Then another. An older man in a hornbill penis gourd stepped toward me, with a look of frowning amazement on his face. He swayed from side to side, glassy-eyed. Suddenly, he pushed the arrow loaded in his bow forward and indicated through gestures that I should hook the bag of tobacco on it. Apparently, he didn't want to risk touching me.

I did so, and he slipped the bag off his arrow; he felt the alien plastic and licked it. He opened the package and sniffed its contents. This meeting was dramatic and bizarre for both of us, but far more so for him, it seemed. After all, I had seen many photographs of Papuan natives in *National Geographic*, and I had read essays about the cultural rituals of the island. He, however, could not be prepared for my hair, my skin, my height, my eyes, the texture of my industrial clothes, my watch, my shoelaces, my copious sweat. It was not surprising that he could not bring himself to graze my hand. He looked utterly perplexed.

In 1988, Tobias Schneebaum, a New York artist and travel writer, published an account of his own "first contact" with a remote Kombai hamlet called Amarou. Schneebaum is known for his pioneering sojourns among New Guinea peoples such as the Asmat. But even he was taken aback by the isolation of the Kombai. He described his meeting with a lone forest-dweller:

> A man appeared, staring at us from behind leaves. He looked cross-eyed and had three long tresses of hair hanging down to the sides of his nose. . . . He stared with a force that might have opened a pathway through the vegetation. Even from thirty feet away we could see his lips quivering. We called to him and he shouted back "Yuh!" I held out tobacco. . . . I moved closer and he came out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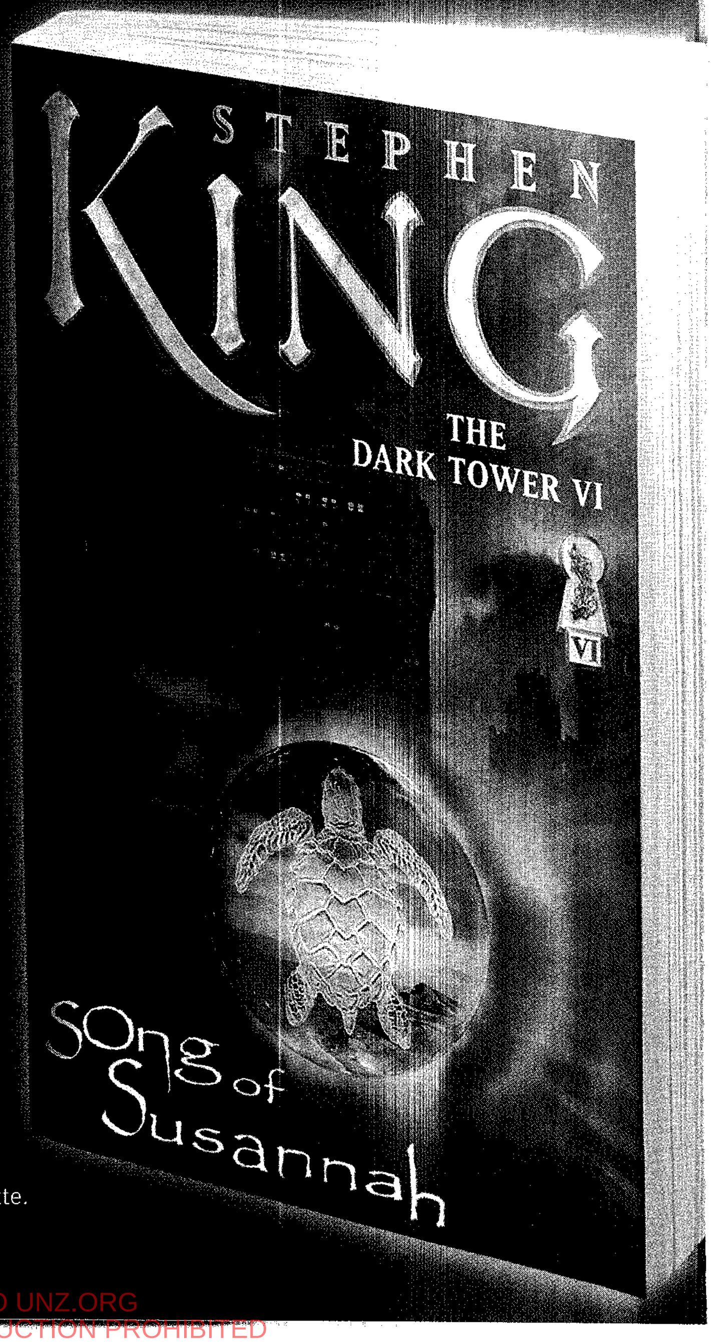

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into the clear space. He took the machete, examined it carefully, ran his tongue along the blade, smelled it, then climbed up to the house.

Yanbu arrived at my side and spoke to the man in Kombai, urging him to shake hands with me. The man's name, Yanbu told me, was Mamandeo. "*Nari, nari,*" I tried. We began saying "*Nari*" to each other, over and over. An hour later, all twenty Kombai had calmed down and we were smoking tobacco together, using pipes as large as didgeridoos. "When we saw you, we thought, What is that?" Mamandeo admitted. "Then we were mad. Then we were scared."

The pig feast started in the late afternoon and lasted until dark. The animal was cooked in stones wrapped in leaves; its hair had been scraped off with bamboo knives. As the men ate, they scooped up the bloody meat in large oyster shells. We watched, but did not eat. Later, I asked Mamandeo how his family had acquired the shells. Had he been to the sea? He responded with a bored shrug: he had traded with neighbors for them, he said.

During the feast, the women had sequestered themselves. Travelling among the Kombai, I had noticed the apparent severity of the division between men and women: they did not sleep together and did not eat together, and their days were often spent apart; there was little sign of what we would call intimacy. It was a far cry from Paul Gauguin's highly eroticized account of his life in Tahiti, "Noa Noa," which presents idealized, golden-skinned islanders as avatars of sexual openness. New Guinea has attracted its own romantic lyricists. In the nineteen-fifties, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist D. Carleton Gajdusek travelled there, to study emerging diseases; his detailed journals describe a similarly fluid sexual charm and freedom in the island's many societies. (Gajdusek later pleaded guilty to sexually abusing a teen-age boy he had adopted from Micronesia.) Such depictions have been questioned by later scholars. The South Sea islands, it seems, are not quite the riotous free-for-all that primitivists imagined.

We sat down at our rustic dinner table and lit our candles. Men and boys gathered around to stare at the bright displays on our digital cameras. The older men looked fearfully at the tiny pictures on the LCD screens, but the children were quick to grasp the idea that the cameras displayed small-size images of themselves.

Woolford asked if they had seen a white man before, and, with no hesitation, they shook their heads. A man named Mauraga said, "We thought you might be people. But white skin? We were shocked."

There is no logging or mining anywhere near the Kombai forests; the charter flight to Wanggemalo is expensive. When you add the ferocity of the environment and the menace of malaria, the Kombai's isolation becomes far less difficult to understand. Equally important, perhaps, is the desire for solitude of the Kombai themselves. Rupert Stasch, an anthropologist at Reed College, and a leading expert on the region, told me that he thought the Kombai choose to be alone. "It's not a condition they sit in passively, until some great explorer comes along and relieves them of it," he said. This desire to remain in the forest should not to be confused with hostility toward others, he added. "The Kombai and Korowai people love moral relations that are demonstrated through conversation, gift-giving, and acts of care."

In fact, the forest Kombai were more than willing to sit, smoke, and talk once we had exchanged gifts and proved that we had no aggressive intentions. That night, three of them stared at the assorted campers' junk on the table. They were particularly fascinated by the synthetic ice-blue tint of our plastic water bottles. And, once again, the candles were a sensation.

"We live in darkness," a man named Andono said. "Could you bring us a candle if you come again?" Since Kombai doesn't have a word for candle, he said *lilin,* the Bahasa word for candle, which Yanbu had used while translating.

I then offered them malted biscuits. With extreme caution, they held them up to the candle, turned them over, inspected them gravely, then stuck out their tongues to touch the surface. They were nonplussed and suspicious. Then, egged on by Yanbu, they bit off morsels.

The Kombai have a discreet way of spitting. They form a blob of saliva on their lips, lean over, and then let it fall silently.

"It makes me want to vomit," Mamandeo said.

Next, a spoonful of white sugar. They nibbled at it and then, with disgust, went through the same spitting motion.

"It makes us want to vomit," Mauraga said.

We tried a simple cup of water next.

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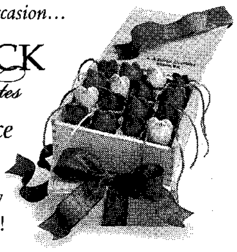
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But the plastic of the cup upset them, the feel of it against their lips. They spat out the water.

"It makes me want to vomit," Andono said.

Afterward, we walked with the men back up to the crest, smoking. Far across the forest, we could see people swinging handfuls of burning grass as they wound their way back to other tree houses. We listened for a long time to the Kombai men singing and playing their bamboo harps. The jungle felt dreamily serene at last. For a moment, I felt closer to these people, and to their single song, which never seemed to change; it was strange to think that a touristic enterprise had created a genuine moment of connection.

At the same time, it was hard not to wonder why the Kombai had not hit upon certain fundamental innovations. "Why haven't they improved their gardens or come up with some kind of lamp or candle?" Juha asked, as if confessing a dirty secret. "The Egyptians had oil lamps, didn't they? I thought curiosity was a universal human instinct."

As Juha and I talked, we became boorishly impatient with the Kombai. "I mean, thirty thousand years, and no *lamp*?" Juha said. "We shouldn't be judging them, but we do." Their isolation was equally difficult to absorb. "We can't accept their immobility, their stasis," Juha continued. "We can't help it. It's stupid of us, but there you are." He paused and laughed. "But why should they travel far and wide?" he said. "They think we're mad for doing that. They must look at all our gear, our things, and think we're insane."

We *are* insane, I thought.

It was also true that, in talking about their "stasis," we were speaking of them as mythical primitives—as if they were somehow living outside of history. Yet hadn't Brimob, who lived only a few days' walk from here, killed an Indonesian officer with an arrow? History was much closer than it appeared.

"Could you live here?" I asked Juha.

"It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen. But no, I couldn't live here. I would go mad."

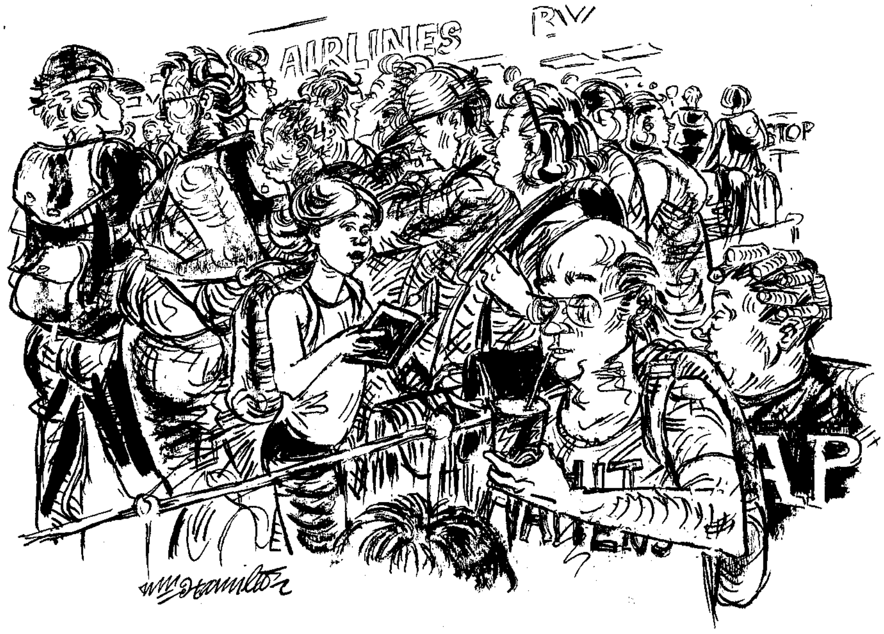
"So would I," I said. "I would go mad, but I don't really know why."

"Because you couldn't travel?"

"Maybe. Or because I couldn't eat sago grubs."

"And yet the Kombai seem so happy, don't they?" Juha said, musingly.

Who could say? To my eyes, our Kombai porters had a sly jollity about them; they seemed to love horsing around during our long daily walks. Then again, we were providing them with food and, to an extent, were amusing *them* with our clownish oddities. It would have been foolish to draw any sweeping conclusions. The youngest porter, a six-year-old boy named Nehemiah, followed me to the river every day and showed me how to throw stones; in return, I taught him how to boogie-woogie, which made him collapse with laughter. But sometimes I noticed him watching me with grave earnestness. Then, when I caught his eye again, the big grin returned, and he would wiggle his hips and shout, "Boogie-woogie!" It was impossible to know what he was really thinking.



"Mom—what the hell was the jet set?"

Juha and I went to bed. At 4 A.M., I was violently awakened by rain falling through my tent roof. It's a golden rule of camping that you must peg your rain fly before sleep, but I had failed to do so. Within seconds I was outside, naked, with a flashlight, struggling with the rain fly as a monsoon rain crashed down. I began screaming abuse at pegs, ropes, and even my own hands. But as I was struggling with the intractable fly, my body streaming with water, I began laughing to myself—at myself. Looking around, I realized that I had woken a few Kombai warriors, who were huddled together beneath one of the tree houses. I imagined their thoughts: Thirty thousand years, and they still can't figure out how to keep dry.

At first light, a line of small boys passed by me in the mist. They were returning from the river, each one wearing a fresh white cockatoo feather in his hair and holding a tall tube of sugarcane filled with water. They looked over at me with the pity that the naked feel for the clothed.

After another day's walk, we arrived at another tree house. A young man named Gagerigo came out to meet us, scowling as he chewed on a twig, and it took some time to persuade him and his old uncle, Mangualo, that we were benign. Gagerigo wore a leaf and nothing else, and his gaze was sombrely averted. Finally convinced, they took us up into the house. A stormy wind was blowing, and the house swayed. Its floors were made of bamboo strips lashed together. The sago ceilings were covered with mouse and fish skulls, along with hundreds of cockroaches. Exhausted by the walk, we sat down, and Gagerigo told us that he was more afraid of us than he was of cassowaries. He said that he had never seen a white person before; none of the people had.

That evening, Mangualo told us, with Yanbu's help, that he didn't want to go to Wanggemalo, because he was "scared of clothes." He then added that he would much prefer it if we were naked: "We would be less afraid if you were naked, if

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you smelled like us!" The Kombai rarely wash in rivers, whereas we plunged in at every opportunity. "It would be even better if you wore a *koteka*"—a penis gourd—"like us." He had a point: we were now five hobos in filthy, tattered clothes.

It was starry, hot, and humid. Cicadas shrieked in the rattan. Georg, Theresia, Juha, and I talked with Woolford about how we had all adapted to the jungle, though we were also beginning to fray, mentally as well as physically. Once, our group had been surprised by a huge black spider with pencil-thin fangs; the porters had speared it to death. (Yanbu, upon being told the story, observed that the spider's bite could kill you.) Woolford told us that our experience in Papua was perhaps more than a temporary adaptation. We could be in the midst of a more profound interior change. The trek was a short immersion, he said, but its intensity was destabilizing. And wasn't that why we had come—not to study an alien culture but to be changed ourselves? Wasn't that what travel used to be all about?

In 1961, Carleton Gajdusek wrote in his New Guinea journal, "It is strange how mediocre all in civilization seems—art, journalism, philosophy, motion pictures, and even music, whenever I leave or 'come out from' the New Guinea bush. I would have suspected the reverse. . . . Perhaps it is their great remoteness from the real nature of man and his natural world environment that makes them appear flat and unreal." There was, in our grisly slog through the forest, a shimmering animal joy—not pleasure or excitement—that deepened each day. "Moments when you merge with objective reality—true nirvana," the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski wrote of his own voyage to the South Pacific. I had little idea what to make of the Kombai over all, but their wild sweetness had rubbed off on us. Nevertheless, it was a romance.

The next day, a teen-age boy appeared on the trail, carrying a speared bird in his hand. His hair was threaded with pieces of wild orchid. He, it turned out, was headed to the same tree house that we were. It was a lucky break, for he had been at the pig feast and remembered us. We wouldn't have to have the usual psychodrama upon our arrival.

The chief of the tree house was Mambi, a handsomely bearded man with a sultry charisma. He shook our hands warmly: "*Nari, nari, nari.*" We sat and smoked with him, as flying foxes shrilled in the trees. I couldn't resist asking him a question that had been nagging at me. You have seen an airplane going overhead, I said to him, through Yanbu. What do you think it is? You've seen it several times, haven't you? Do you never wonder how or why it flies?

"I never thought about it," he said, shaking his head slowly. "I just run away and hide when it passes overhead."

I explained that white people like us had made the planes. It was our machine, our way of getting about.

"How does it fly?" Mambi asked.

I was halfway through my explanation of the dynamics of winged flight when I realized that I wasn't sure exactly how airplanes fly. He looked at me intently, curious to witness a man who could not explain how his own culture's inventions actually worked. I suddenly dreaded him asking me how my flashlight worked or how my Gore-Tex boots were made waterproof. About these marvellous inventions of my culture I was essentially as ignorant as he.

Mambi then surprised me by saying, "We hope that you'll come back one day to see us." It was the first time that a Kombai person had expressed a desire to see us again.

The next morning, we went down to a part of a nearby river that was claustrophobically closed in by giant sago palms. This time, men and women were gathered together. The men were going to cut down a sago tree with their hulking stone axes. The felling took an hour. The trunk was then split open, and the women moved in with stone clubs to smash the interior to pulp. The pulp was drained through a frond and rolled into balls. The men sat down to smoke, and a soporific mood descended upon us. I looked up and saw Juha surrounded by a large group of the younger boys. The boys shouted and stamped their feet around the tall Viking, chanting, "Juha! Juha!" For these Kombai boys, Juha was a fascinating creature: weird, exotic, entertaining. *We* were the tigers in the cage, not them. Juha turned to me and winked. It was a refreshing, even relieving, experience—to be the object, not the voyeur.

Later, we went for a swim. There was a sinisterly beautiful river below Mambi's

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tree house, with a white beach sheltered by cane grass. The water was deep and opaquely cold, and there was a threat of crocodiles. It was not the last river we bathed in, but it was by far the most otherworldly. We swam naked through interconnecting pools while the porters laughed at our ungainly white bodies. There was now a sort of nonverbal comradeship between us, and it seemed incredible that in two weeks we would all return to lives that were mutually incomprehensible.

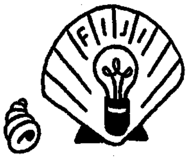
"After we leave, what will they say about us?" I asked my companions. "What do they think about us? That's one thing we will never know, and it's the thing I'd most like to know."

In Graham Greene's novel "A Burnt-Out Case," mystified Africans sing about their European visitors: "Here is a white man who is neither a father nor a doctor. He has no beard. He comes from a long way away—we do not know from where—and he tells no-one to what place he is going nor why. He is a rich man, for he drinks whisky every evening and he smokes all the time. Yet he offers no man a cigarette."

We relaxed in the water for a long time. I asked Woolford if he felt a moral responsibility to help the Kombai maintain a way of life that, to our eyes, had not changed much in fifteen thousand years. You could argue, he responded, that the Kombai's lives are changing all the time, thanks to missionaries, the occasional anthropologist, Indonesian police, and groups like ours. Yet Woolford said that he tried, in his way, not to upend Kombai traditions. He refused, for example, to give the Kombai clothes, because they didn't wash them and thus contracted skin diseases. On the other hand, could he refuse them candles when they begged for them, when they said they lived in darkness? "I've decided to bring a box of candles next time," he said.

Candles in the jungle could indeed be revolutionary. Then again, perhaps we were overstating our influence. It was possible, I suggested, that the Kombai had unsettled us far more than we had unsettled them. "It isn't so much the Kombai I worry about with jungle tourism—it's the tourists themselves," Rupert Stasch, the anthropologist, had told me. "The Kombai often like tourism. It can be good for them. It's tourists themselves who are the real moral problem. Because often it's the urban Westerners who are 'uncontacted,' in the sense that they're stuck inside their own projected fantasies."

A week later, we made the last hike, back to Wanggemalo, and as we dragged ourselves through the sago swamps, slowed by heat exhaustion and diarrhea, I heard a sound that brought tears to my eyes: a cock crowing!



On our final day in Wanggemalo, I gave my Therm-a-Rest compressible mattress to Stephanus, who had hauled my pack through fifty miles of jungle. There were sad leave-takings. Nearly the whole population of Wanggemalo—a hundred or so people—came to the airstrip to see us off. (To my relief, the boy who had been accused of being a *kakua* was there, waving with the others: he must have survived the test.) We told the porters that we would come back. They waved at us, knowing, surely, that none of us, except Woolford, ever would. They seemed melancholy, but I wasn't certain.

Several weeks after I returned to New York, I called Georg and asked him how his re-insertion into civilization was going. How did Papua seem now that he was back in the Tyrol?

"Like a dream," he said. "A complete dream."

What did he remember most from our trip?

"Without question, giving the tobacco to the man in the first tree house," he said. "And that beautiful river by Mambi's place." He paused. "In truth, Theresia and I are having quite a hard time adjusting. We suddenly realize how weird and noisy our culture is. We miss the closeness with nature. I know it sounds hackneyed, but there it is. Perhaps we'll go again in 2007, just to keep our promise to the Kombai. Perhaps you'll join us?" I could imagine him rubbing his beard uneasily as he paused. "The Kombai will probably be the same. But maybe not." ♦

Headline in the Olympia (Wash.) Olympian.

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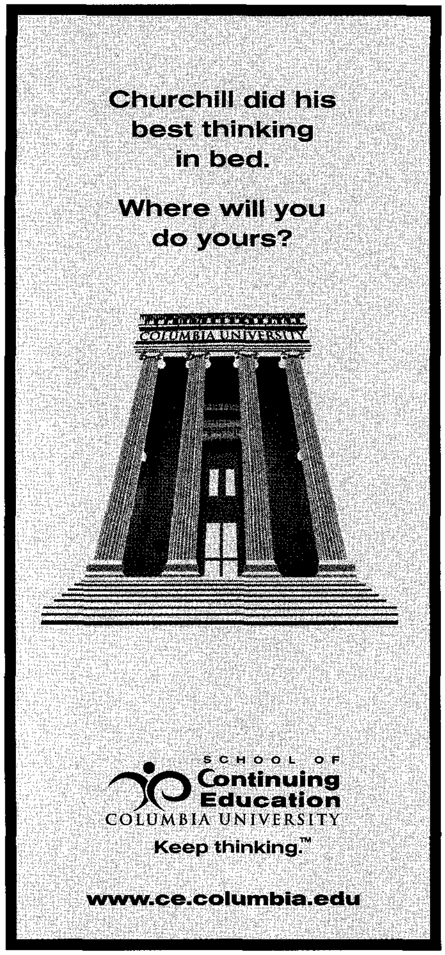

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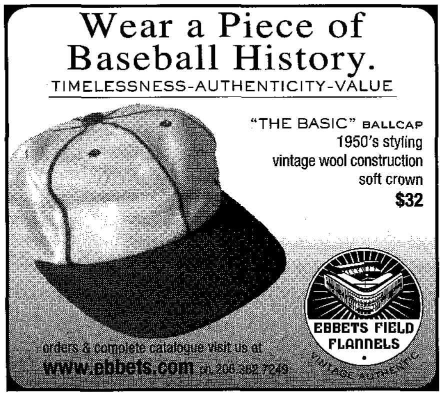

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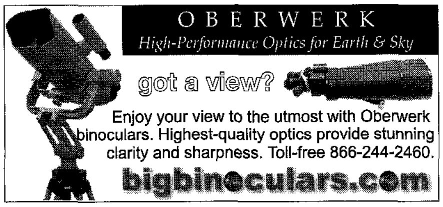

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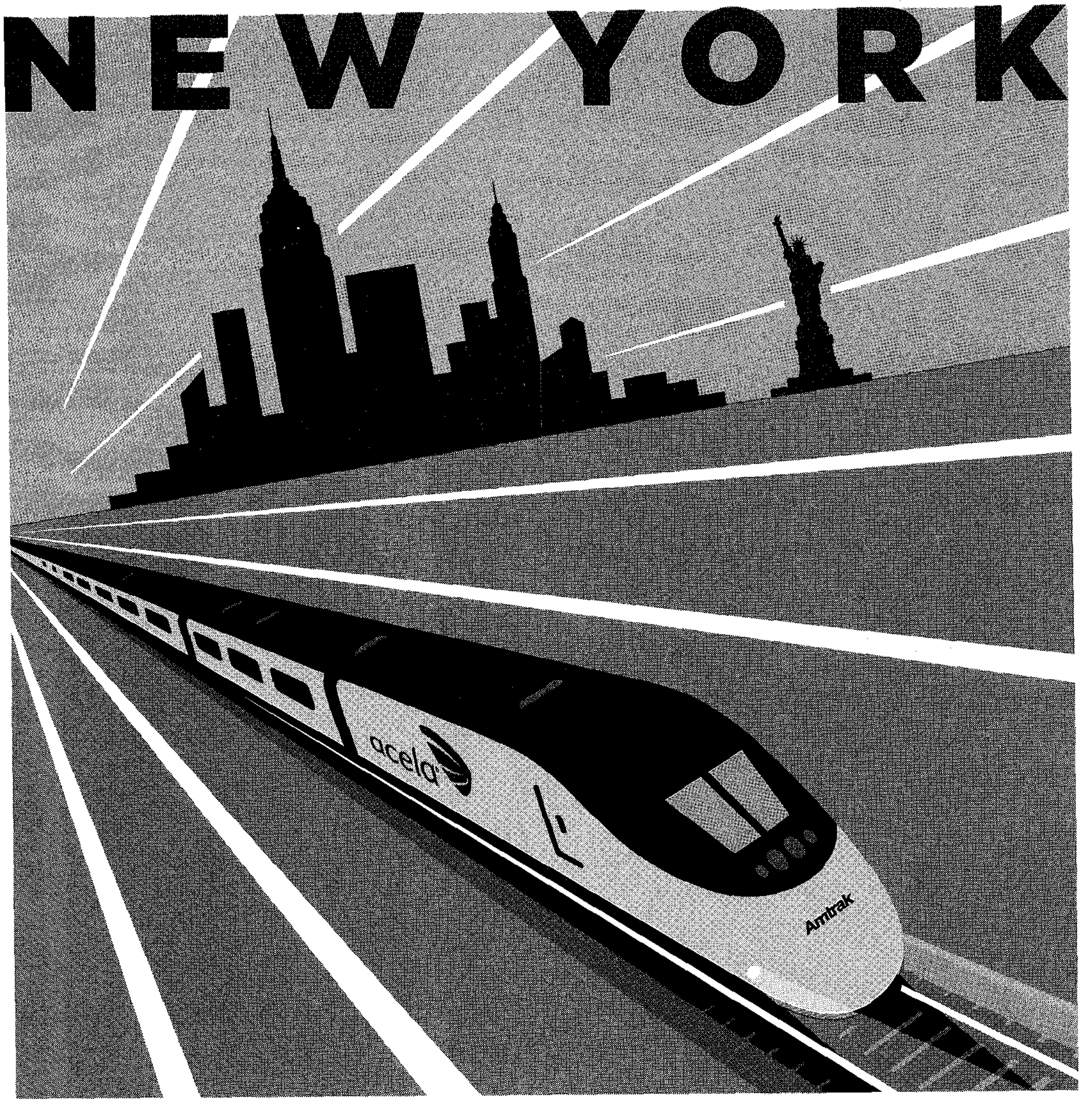

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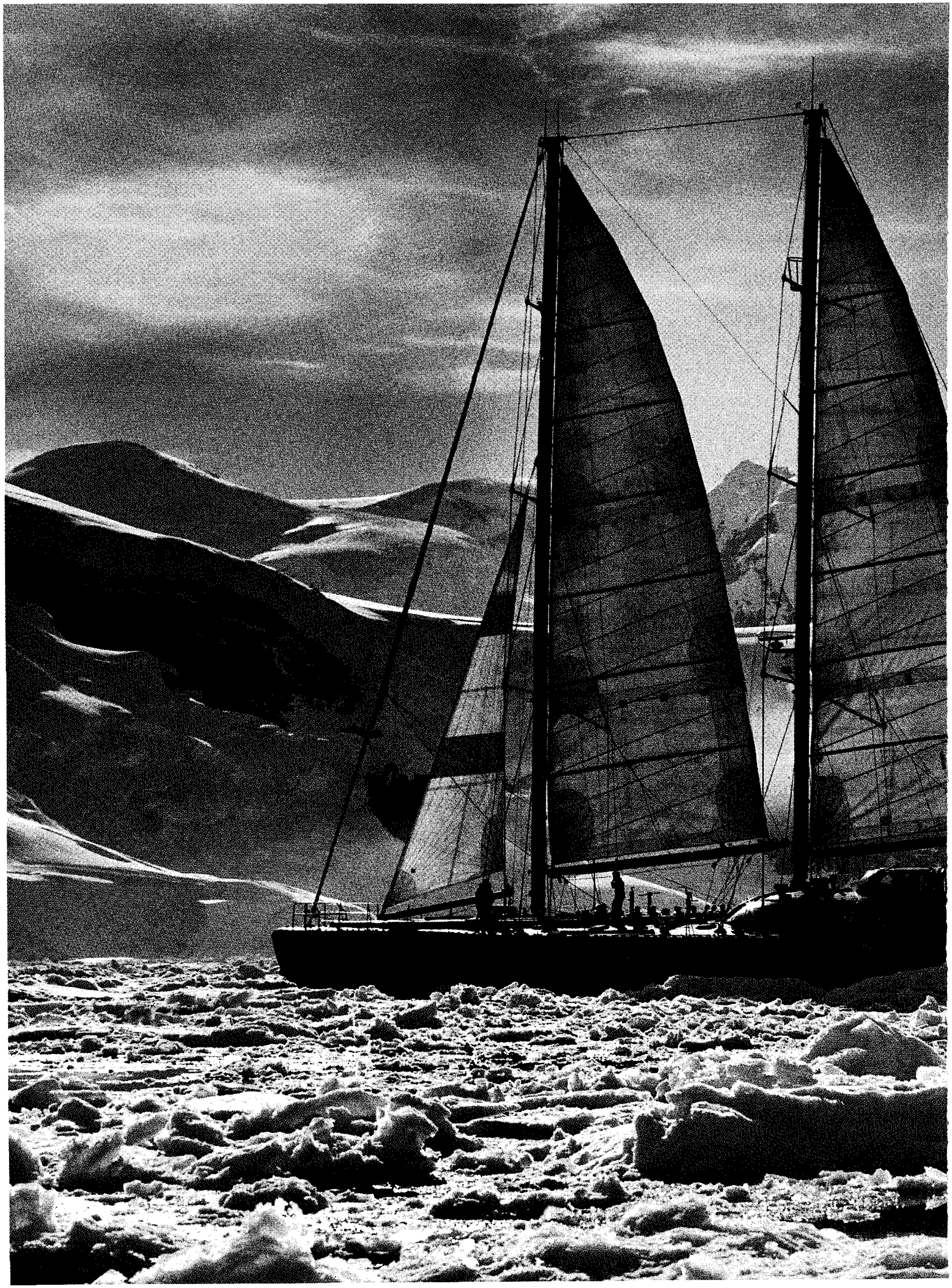


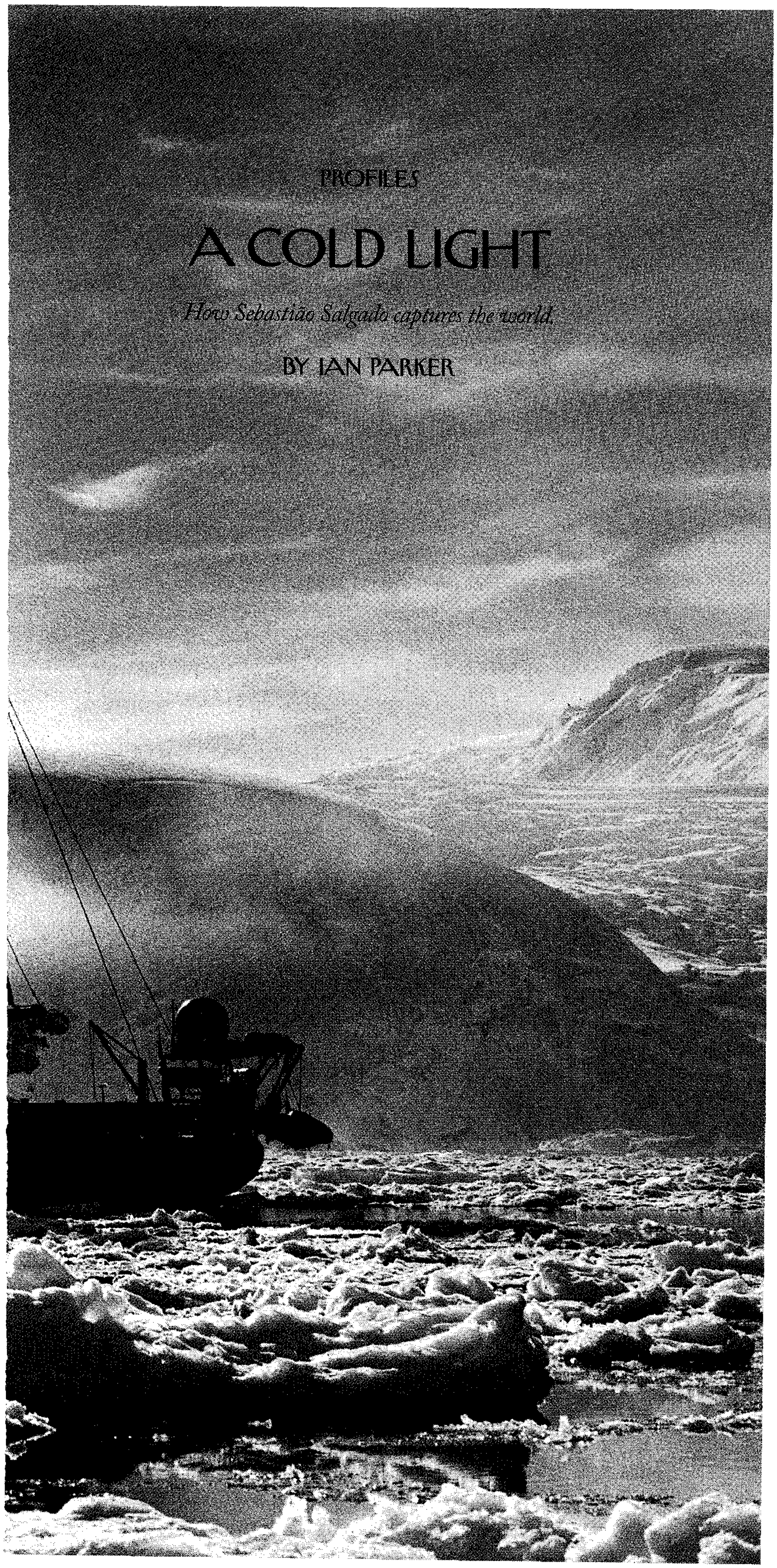
Tara, the hundred-and-twenty-foot ice-breaking yacht that Salgado and the author sailed on from Ushuaia, the southernmost town

PROFILES

A COLD LIGHT

How Sebastião Salgado captures the world.

BY IAN PARKER

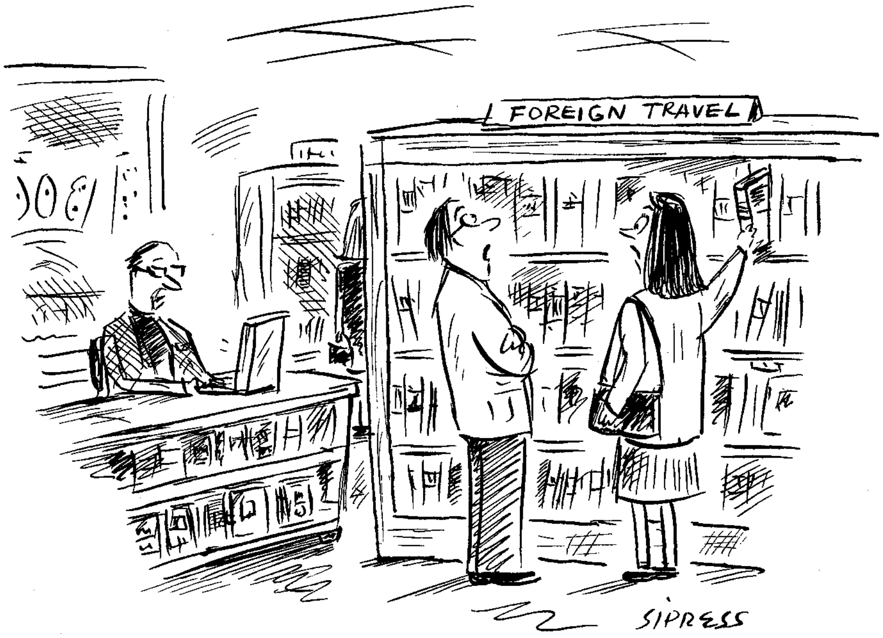


gentina, to the Antarctic Peninsula, in January, 2005. Photographs by Sebastião Salgado.

The Amazonas photographic agency is in a neighborhood of rising elegance and property prices in northeastern Paris, in a former coal warehouse on the Saint-Martin canal. Just in front of the building, a steeply arched wrought-iron footbridge extends over the water to the Hôtel du Nord, where Marcel Carné set his melancholy film of the same name. Inside the agency, which features floors of polished hardwood that were imported from Brazil, half a million postcard-size work prints are immaculately arranged in smooth-running drawers. Six people work here, including two full-time photographic printers, each with his own darkroom.

Sebastião Salgado, the Brazilian-born photojournalist known for beautiful black-and-white photographs of people living difficult lives, is the agency's only photographer. In the world of photojournalism, a place where his fame and magisterial rhythm of work give him a singular status, Salgado has the added distinction of being his own producer: he owns the factory. And although Salgado often works abroad, when he does return to his family in Paris he walks each day to Amazonas, from an apartment fifteen minutes away.

One morning a few weeks ago, Salgado was in the basement of the office, where the sound of continuously running water—prints were being rinsed nearby—gave the room the feel of compulsory calm found in the lobbies of some expensive hotels. On a wall in front of him was a poster-size reproduction of a photograph he had taken in Serra Pelada, a Brazilian gold mine, in 1986. It showed thousands of men—sacrificial and single-minded, each apparently working for himself—covering every surface of a great open pit, hauling dirt-filled sacks on makeshift ladders. A silvery sheen of mud covers the men, making it nearly impossible to tell that they are wearing modern clothes. A contemporary image saturated in the long history of South American gold prospecting and in a longer history of human toil, it comes from a series of extraordinary photographs taken at the same mine which have been described as "evocative of the masterworks of Pieter Brueghel and Cecil B. De Mille." Fusing fact to myth, past to present, the images helped propel Salgado's already successful career to something far loftier, much the



"Let's go someplace awful to avoid the tourists."

• •

way Bono is something more than a pop star. Salgado, a former economist, has become an architect of photojournalistic projects with a global reach, an icon of social conscience, a kind of solo branch of the United Nations.

A broad-shouldered, Picasso-ish man of sixty-one, he was wearing jeans and a V-necked cashmere sweater over a checked shirt. He had a penknife in a leather pouch fixed to his belt, and gold-rimmed half-moon reading glasses on a chain around his neck. His head is shaved bald, and his face is unlined; you can therefore find your gaze skidding off him, or snagging on his bushy eyebrows, which rise and fall in the beseeching way of a conductor squeezing sad and delicate sounds out of an orchestra. Lélia Wanick Salgado, his wife of more than thirty years, the editor of his books and his exhibitions, and the director of Amazonas, was consulting with Salgado about a future retrospective in Paris. She is a slim woman with a smoker's dark-textured voice; she was dressed all in black, and at one point in the conversation her husband spun her slowly around, picking pieces of lint from her clothes; when he was done, she kissed him on the lips.

Lélia went to the office space upstairs, where Sebastião's photographs are sold to magazines, and where they are collected in vast books and travelling exhibitions, and where the phone calls are about honorary degrees and invitations to sit on panels and accept awards. ("We have two talents and they are complementary," she later said. "He knows how to take photographs and I know how to exploit them.") Downstairs, Salgado sat at a table with a longtime colleague, Françoise Piffard. They had boxes of small, freshly printed photographs in front of them—images from his latest long-term, self-assigned project, "Genesis." For the first time, Salgado is photographing wild animals instead of people, in an enterprise that carries at least a hint of the idea that he is owed a vacation. He is visiting environments unchanged by human progress, after more than thirty years spent photographing miserably changing environments, and people in the middle of economic or political upheaval. Salgado started "Genesis" last year, photographing giant tortoises in the Galápagos Islands, gorillas in central Africa, whales off the Argentine coast. He expects to finish in 2012.

Salgado had just returned from Antarctica, and before him were dozens of small photographs of penguins feeding their offspring by regurgitation, jamming their beaks down into the throats of their young; there were also glaciers, and icebergs, and albatrosses looking directly into the camera. "Nice, nice pictures. Incredible dignity they had," Salgado said of the birds. His first language is Portuguese, and he speaks both French and English with an accent that becomes stronger if he gets agitated or excited; in English, "refugees" becomes "hefugees," for example.

The work prints needed to be divided into two piles: yes and no. Such sifting would eventually lead to a final selection of about fifty images, which would be presented to magazines. In an action repeated every minute or so, Salgado held up two photographs with a similar composition, often taken moments apart, and he and Piffard would try to find a weaker print to reject, with Salgado saying, "I wish the sky was a bit more dramatic," or, "I don't think that's too horrible," or enthusing, "That's beautiful, no? That is the idea, how close we can be to Genesis, yet in our times!" Piffard wore magnifying goggles, and peered forward with pursed lips, like a jeweller; at times she questioned a composition, or simply said, "I don't think so." Salgado decided on rejects only grudgingly, slapping them down like a frustrated poker player. When he put neither print into the reject pile (which was growing more slowly than the other), Piffard said, "Oh, Sebastião," disapprovingly.

"I'm happy," Salgado said. He rubbed his hand over his smooth scalp. "I believe we have a story." In the room next door, the printers were making more penguins, and more albatrosses. Salgado had returned from Antarctica with more than ten thousand negatives.

A few weeks earlier, I had watched Salgado unpack his bags in a cabin on a hundred-and-twenty-foot ice-breaking yacht moored in the harbor of Ushuaia, the southernmost town in Argentina. At mid-evening, the air was cool, but summer sunshine still entered the room through a skylight. "All this is a question of adaptation," Salgado said, as he arranged his possessions in the small space. "You adapt yourself to any kind of place you find." He had four identical medium-format cameras, each the size of a brick, and several hundred rolls of black-and-white film, which he lined up on the higher of the two bunk beds as neatly as in a store display. He showed me two pairs of khaki pants into which Lélia had sewn Velcro strips at the knee, on the inside, for attaching little pads that made kneeling on the ground more comfortable; some new snow-proof boots; and tiny elasticized rain protectors for his cameras' viewfinders which he had made out of shower caps. He had a ball of wool for darning his sweater, anti-inflammatory drugs for a damaged tendon, Quaker Oats, and Portuguese translations of books by Bruce Chatwin and John Kenneth Galbraith. "And here are fingerless gloves," he said. "In reality, they are not fingerless. You go like this, now out." He folded down a flap, and his fingerless gloves became mittens. "To change the films, you put here again, that's it. That is this." He refolded the flap, then went back and forth: glove, mitten.

The ship was due to sail around Cape Horn, and then south to the Chilean islands of Diego Ramírez, and then the two hundred and fifty or so miles of open sea to the Antarctic Peninsula, an arm on the continent which stretches north toward South America. Salgado would be at sea for six weeks, and I was joining him for part of his trip. The ship was strikingly handsome from the outside—with an unpainted hull of reinforced aluminum that had the broad, shallow proportions of a surfboard—but its interior was not luxurious. It felt like an overcrowded beach house whose décor had been neglected since the mid-nineteen-eighties: the fittings were nondescript pale wood, and the bench seats had worn, blue foam cushions. The walls were decorated with framed images of Endurance, the ship captained by the British Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton; Endurance was trapped by ice in 1915, and then destroyed by it.

There were eight small cabins, each with two narrow bunk beds. The boat's owner, Étienne Bourgois, was housed close to Salgado. Bourgois, an amiable, troubled-looking man of forty-four, is the director of Agnès B., the French fashion company founded by his mother, Agnès. Divorced and the father of five, Bourgois has the face of a young man but the tufty baldness of a sixty-year-old, giving the impression of a high-school student playing King Lear. Bourgois bought the ship in 2003 from the estate of Sir Peter Blake, the New Zealand sailing hero and America's Cup winner. In 2001, Blake sailed the ship—then called the Seamaster—to the Amazon. Near the mouth of the river, armed pirates forced their way on board. Blake was standing at the bottom of the stairs that connect the living quarters to the deck when he opened fire on them with a shotgun that he kept on board. He shot two fingers off a pirate's hand, but the gun jammed; Blake was shot and killed. Lead from Blake's cartridge was still embedded in a window at the top of the stairs.

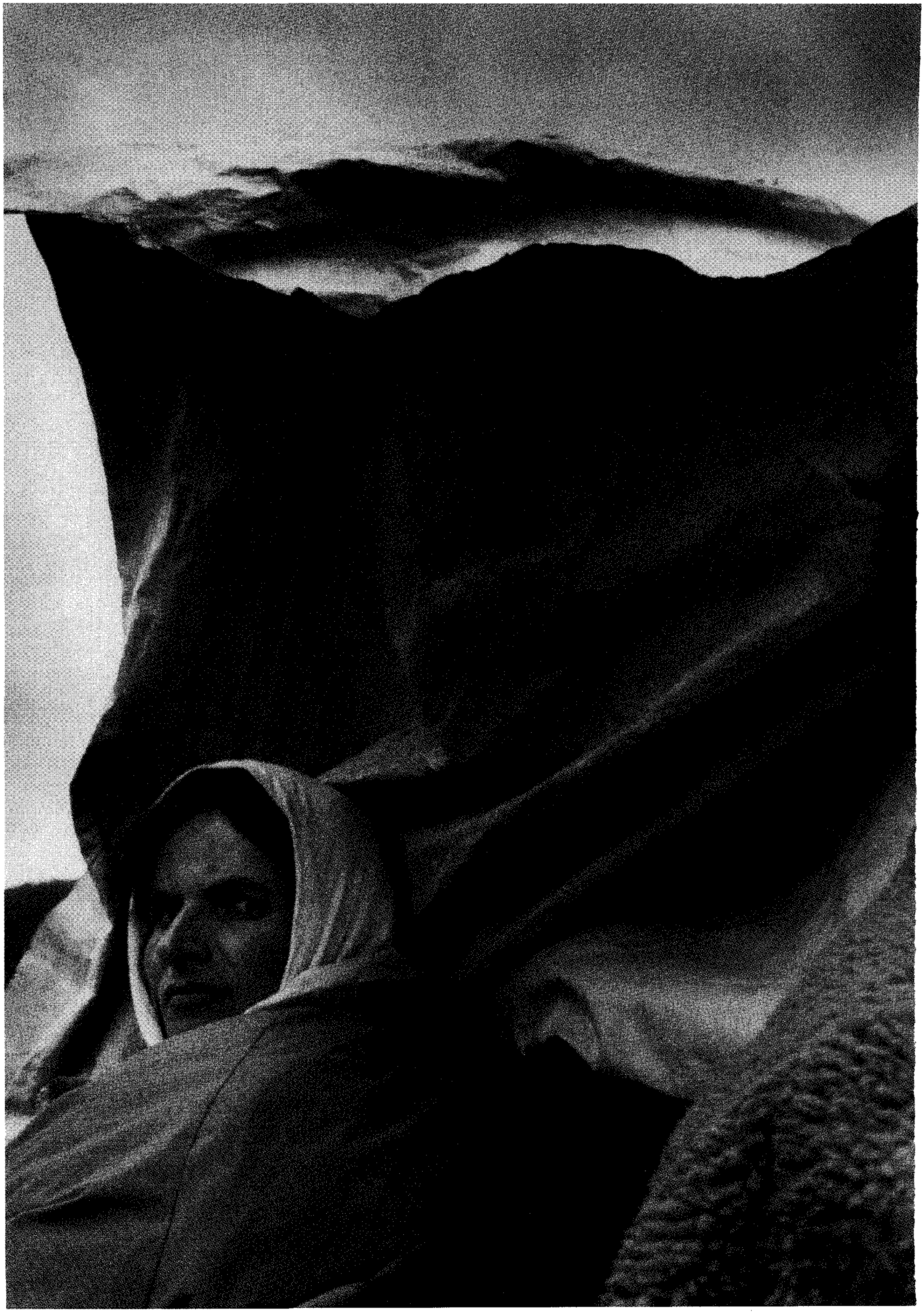
In the last years of his life, Blake was a good-will ambassador for the United Nations Environment Program, UNEP. After Bourgois bought the Seamaster—and renamed it Tara, his family's traditional name for its boats—he arranged to continue the association with UNEP. UNEP officials also happened to be in conversation with Salgado, and knew of his plans to include Antarctica among the twenty or so stories that would make up the "Genesis" project. Bourgois offered Salgado a ride. For all the obvious appeal of a private yacht exploring the continent on its own timetable, Salgado hesitated. Bourgois's idea was a shared expedition for poets, painters, and photographers. "I said no," Salgado told me. "I said, I apologize, I cannot accept to go and look at things together, one make pictures, another write—a kind of tourism. I must go to *work*." (Salgado has been to every country in the world, he says, except New Zealand, Nicaragua, and Tonga, and has never bought himself a souvenir.) Bourgois and Salgado agreed on a separate trip; the artists would have their adventure another time. His agency put up about twenty thousand dollars, a quarter of the cost.

Tara had sixteen people on board, most of them Bourgois's compatriots. There was a paid crew of five, including the ship's captain—a woman in her thirties—and a young female chef and her boyfriend, a sailor who had recently bought a trumpet but had only learned to play the opening notes of "La Vie en Rose." Tara was also carrying Bourgois's cousin and business partner, as well as a wiry alpine climbing guide with a G.P.S.-equipped wristwatch; an official Tara photographer; three experienced French sailors; and two men from a French nature television show, who were doing research for a possible Antarctica documentary. (Salgado was wary. "TV is heavy," he said. "People are always so impressed. 'Oh, it's *television*.' ")

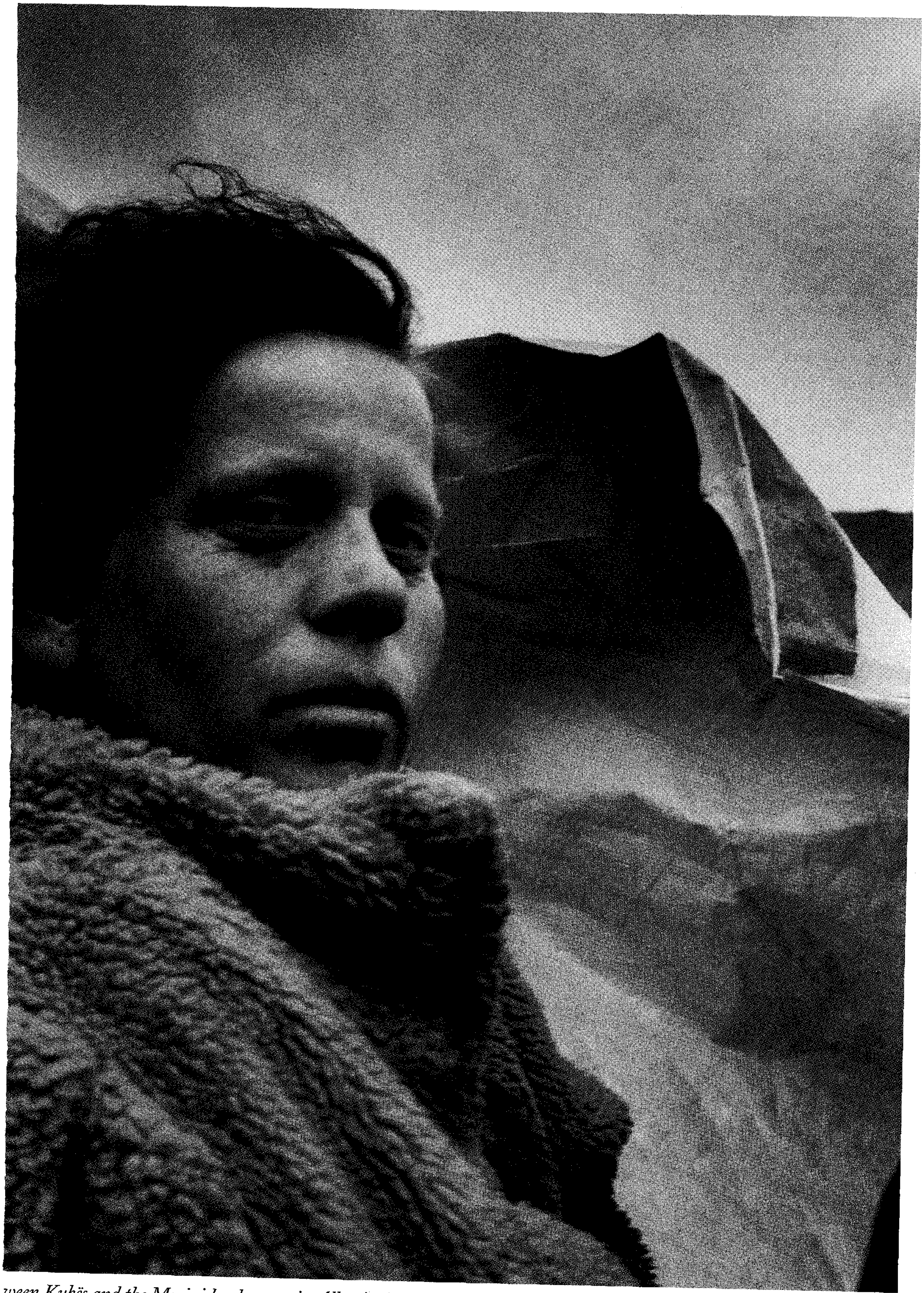
Tara was delayed in Ushuaia for a day. The crew and guests ate lunch and drank wine together squeezed around a table in the main living area. Salgado, the oldest at the table, was friendly, but in a rather formal, fastidious way; a manner that was mirrored in the care with which he used his penknife (rather than the available silverware) to cut up fruit. Asked about his priorities in Antarctica, he said, "I want everything—the animals, the landscapes. I want the planet." After lunch, when the table became cluttered with the digital cameras and laptop computers of his shipmates (Salgado had neither), he walked into town to buy some Ziploc bags. Sunlight was peeping through gray Scottish skies. "Look at this light, oh boy," he said, adding, with a black-and-white photographer's satisfaction, "In color, this is shit."

"Genesis" is mainly funded by Amazonas' deals with magazines and newspapers, among them, *Paris Match*, in France; the *Guardian*, in Britain; *Rolling Stone*, in the United States; and *Visão*, in Portugal. (This leaves a financial shortfall that is made up by grants, including three hundred thousand dollars from the Christensen Fund, and by the occasional advertising job—Illy coffee, for example—for which Salgado asks around thirty thousand dollars a day.) Eventually, there is likely to be a "Genesis" book and exhibition. "I'm having the opportunity of my life to be in the most beautiful places in the planet!" he said. "And probably doing my last story in photography. I'll finish when I'm seventy years old. Not that I'll stop photography, but I'm not sure if I'll have strength enough to do another long-term project."

His two previous projects on a similar scale, "Workers" and "Migrations," each took more than five years. The latter, a study of people displaced by war and by a globalized world economy, was punishing to produce, physically and mentally, and left Salgado unsure if mankind deserved to survive. The "Genesis" project had its roots in that period of despair, Salgado said. But he is a former Marxist activist and a onetime student of Esperanto, and although he has lost the big mustache of his youth, he has a surviving confidence in



Two Kosovar women, among the tens of thousands of refugees who left their homes to flee the conflict with the Serbs, on the



ween Kukës and the Morini border post, in Albania, in 1999.

the possibility of prompting radical action. “Genesis” was in part inspired by the Instituto Terra, a nonprofit environmental foundation that Lélia and Sebastião run on seventeen hundred acres of former farmland in the rain forest of southeast Brazil. (The Salgados have a home by the sea, a few hours away.) The Salgados have planted seven hundred and forty thousand trees on the site so far, with the aim of planting a million and a half trees. The land is returning to its prelapsarian state; schoolchildren are being brought to see it. “This gave me a big hope that we can live with nature, be in peace with our planet,” Salgado said. “Genesis,” then, could set a similar example. Salgado, who talks of his photography only as a tool—an action undertaken in the world of information, not the world of art—had managed to balance gloom with a sense of purpose. “Forty-six per cent of the planet is not destroyed,” he said. “I must show this, take pictures that show it’s necessary to preserve these places. Show how wide they are, how big they are.”

FOUR POEMS OF YOUTH

1. THE DREAM

Later
that now long-lost night
in December, beside you, I saw
that the leaves had returned
to the branches
outside my window. Now
that is all it was: leaves, blowing
in the windy sunlight: somehow,
in spite of the chances against it
occurring, in spite of the critic’s wan sneer,
I dreamed this lovely thing.

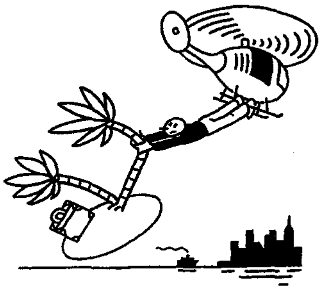
2. MINNEAPOLIS, 1960

Children in a classroom peer
into microscopes.
Bombsights
it occurs
to the young woman
moving from one
to another, peripherally
mesmerized
by the second hand, trees
flailing
dimly in windows.

Tara motored out of Ushuaia. Later, the sails were raised. Salgado made himself weatherproof and took a “king of the world” spot on the bow. When dolphins swam alongside, and his shipmates dashed from side to side to photograph them (and while Bourgois leaned over the railing and slapped Tara’s hull, in what I took to be a known form of human-to-dolphin communication), Salgado remained still, and waited for a dolphin to pass in front of his camera. Rounding Cape Horn the following day, we took photographs of one another; Salgado did not look in anyone’s lens, but instead gazed down into the water, with the air of modest contemplation seen on the face of a Virgin Mary in a Renaissance painting.

We sailed south and lost sight of South America. The air became colder and the sea rougher. Most of those on board spent the afternoon queasily in bed—including Salgado, who listened to his new iPod, which, as he later showed me, included Chopin’s Nocturne No. 2 and a Julio Iglesias song in its Most Played list.

That night, Tara reached Diego Ramírez, a group of small islands sixty miles southwest of Cape Horn, uninhabited but for a lonely meteorological station on one of them. Salgado had official permission to land, a rare entitlement owing something to the ship’s U.N. imprimatur—and to the fact that Salgado himself is a good-will ambassador for UNICEF. After the ship spent a night at anchor, he went ashore by inflatable motorboat with five others. “What a privilege to be here!” Salgado said, after landing awkwardly on a small rocky beach at the foot of some grassy cliffs. He put down his stuff. Photojournalists do not usually travel with assistants, and Salgado, who would never want to be taken out of that category, tends to travel alone, even after having made the switch, for “Genesis,” from 35-mm. Leicas to heavier, medium-format Pentax cameras. But he accepts help, and allowed volunteers to carry some of his equipment. Salgado kept a camera over each shoulder.



It was cold and the sky was a flat gray. We began to climb the slope, pulling ourselves up by tufts of silvery-green grass four or five feet high. Within moments, Salgado found himself standing before a gray-headed albatross—smooth and polished, with smears of black around its eyes. At a distance of about six feet, Salgado raised a camera: the shutter made a surprisingly loud clunk. He moved closer, and quietly sang a classic bossa-nova song, “A Felicidade.”

“Where’s my tripod?” he asked. “The person who’s carrying my stuff needs to be near me.” (His avuncular manner tightened into something harder when he began photographing; by the end of the day, he was holding a hand out behind him, without turning around, to show that he needed his tripod.) The others in the group had already taken their own pictures of the bird and moved on, and had found another albatross, and then another.

3. ON THE RUN

Winter hours, white
dune grass.
Secret
pinewoods to the ocean—now what?

4. THE BLACKOUT: FIRST ANNIVERSARY

It finds me in Port Authority, penniless,
seated at a bar unable to remember
how I came there (*why* is obvious).
Do you know this terror—not to remember?
I go to the men's room and look in the mirror,
look in his aggrieved and music-haunted eyes.
The mouth opens, but there are no words;
there are words, but the mouth will not open.
Tears form but cannot fall, fingers
gradually tightening at my throat . . .
Blood of his blood, flesh of his ghost—
the hand stretched toward me in the flames!
Do you?
I am worn out, I can't go on.

—*Franz Wright*

The slope was covered in birds, which had rarely, if ever, seen humans and had no reason to fear them; they barely moved when approached, beyond turning their heads this way and that, like fashion models. It was hard to think of another environment as congenial to the novice wildlife photographer. (As Art Wolfe, one of America's leading photographers of wildlife, later explained, without scoffing, it is easier if the animals are not running away.)

Salgado, unhurried by the activity above him, retrieved his tripod while keeping his eye on the first albatross as if it were the last bird on earth. He changed film with the deliberation of a mime artist. Each time he took out an exposed film, he had to lick a paper tag to seal it closed, and for this he used a big, slow lick that hinted at the perils of rushed licking. Then, as he wound in the new film, he sang more loudly than before. "It's the only way I get to hold my concentration," he later told me. "When you change the film, you break your sequence. Changing film is an empty moment and you fill it with the music."

Once, years ago, Salgado flew to Rome to take a portrait of the novelist Italo Calvino. "I can only give you an hour," Calvino said upon opening the door. Salgado said he needed at least two or three days. (He got them.) After forty-five minutes on the island, Salgado was still just a few feet above the beach. The day was arranging itself according to two different appreciations of time and space: it was the unspoken instinct of everyone but Salgado to reach the top of the slope quickly, then make a survey—to take possession of the pristine island. Salgado's instinct was to look only at the thing in front of him. "Almost no one in the world has seen this," he said. His left hand, cupped under the lens, made minute movements to focus.

When he finally reached the top of the slope, he found hundreds of albatrosses of a different species, sitting on mud nests the size and shape of a dog's feeding bowl. Salgado inched among them, as infant albatrosses spilled orange vomit onto his new boots. When the sun came out, he shot into the light, as has always been his preference. ("For me, the good pictures are against the light. Against the light, you have shapes, the forms get a contour. It's not easy but I like it.") He said that he wanted to show "the equilibrium of the birds and their environment." Beyond Salgado's hearing, one of the party said, in a friendly enough way, "If it's like this everyplace, we'll be on the island for three months."

Salgado's reputation was built on monumental, backlit images of physical labor and human fortitude, and to watch him work—to wake up for two weeks to the soft buzzing of Salgado shaving his head smooth in the cabin opposite—was to be shown how a shadow of self-portraiture falls across those images. Salgado would not mistake himself for a steelworker or an underfed migrant, but what has interested him in others is what he looks for in himself: a level of imperviousness to testing conditions, and tolerance of a long working day. For Salgado, taking pictures is a pleasure but also a discipline: he is not the kind of photographer who goes to pick up laundry carrying a loaded camera. When I spoke to Robert Pledge, Salgado's friend and agent in the U.S., he could not remember a single occasion in thirty years when Salgado had taken his photograph. (Salgado said that he remembered one.)

At the end of a cold, ten-hour stay on the island at Diego Ramírez, Salgado was able to show no less interest in the day's last albatross than he had shown in the first—holding his thumb and forefinger together in a gesture of epicurean satisfaction while his shipmates slumped on the springy earth, fully gorged on birds and sea lions. "I have a few good pictures," Salgado said. "I don't think I have a great picture. The sky was fifty-per-cent sky, not a hundred-per-cent sky. All my life was like that—looking and waiting for the combination."

For three days after leaving Diego Ramírez, Tara sailed across the Drake Passage, beyond sight of land. Salgado had to endure a period of enforced inactivity. The weather was stormy, and the front of the ship rose up and then came banging down with the sound of someone dropping a small car onto the deck. Seawater washed over the skylights. In the living area, blue rubber matting was brought out to stop the plates from sliding off the table. It began to snow. Salgado, restless at times, made slow tours of the main cabin, trying to stay upright while reading and rereading the dishwashing roster and the warnings on packets of seasickness pills.

Salgado is not an ebullient man: his sociability sometimes seems to come from a portfolio of skills learned with the aim of taking fine photographs; he often allows his sentences to fade away, with a sigh—"And this is that . . ." But when he talks about the Instituto Terra, to which he and his wife have given much of their time and income in recent years, he grows animated. As we thumped through the waves, he told me how fish and birds had reappeared at the site; how his friend Robin Williams (with whom he spent Election Night last year in L.A.) had put thirty thousand dollars into a theatre at the institute; how the institute had become one of the town's largest employers. One evening, he drew a little map of the land in my notebook. "The pumas are back!" he said. "You know, one puma tells another."

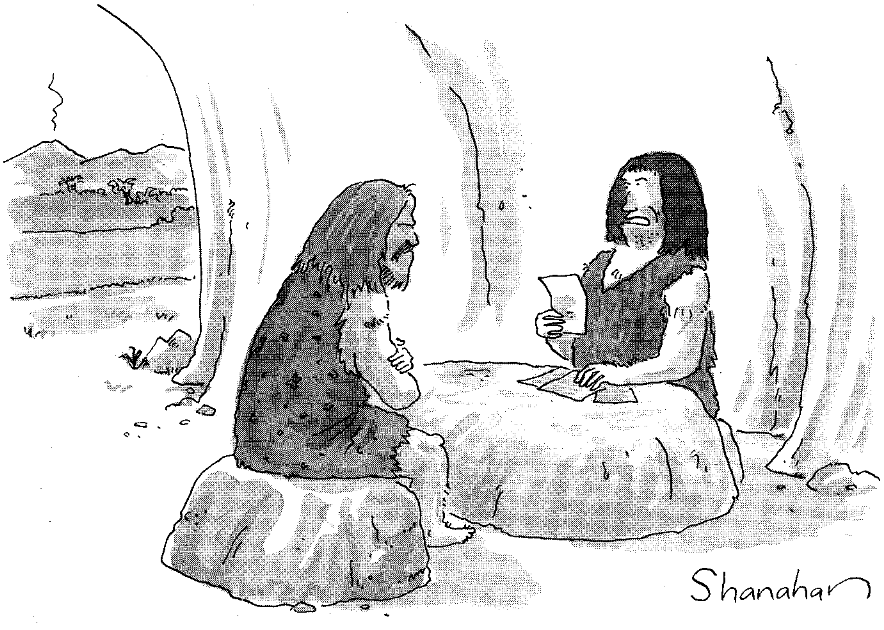
The Instituto's seventeen hundred acres had previously belonged to Salgado's father, a freemason and local assembly member who was so formal that his children called him *Senhor*. Salgado grew up a few minutes from the ranch, in the town of Aimorés, in a house with seven sisters. His mother was a dressmaker. During his childhood, Salgado watched as his family's land, once forest, turned to dust, as his father brought more and more cattle onto it. When Sebastião and Lélia bought the acreage from the family, in 1991, "the land was dead," Salgado said. Learning of their idea of turning the soil back over to trees, Salgado's father told them that they were crazy. (He died in 2001; Salgado's mother died the following year.)

"I am from the most baroque place on the planet," Salgado said to me. His family was not particularly religious, and he grew up to be a nonbeliever, but Salgado sang (in Latin) in the choir of his Catholic, Salesian high school, and was surrounded by the kind of religious architecture and iconography that are embedded in his work: Sudanese refugees illuminated by heavenly shafts of light; a gold miner leaning on a post in the pose of a martyred saint. To these childhood influences Salgado then added a leftist sensibility, formed at a moment of repression and rebellion in Brazilian history. He studied economics first in Vitória, the nearest large city to Aimorés, where he met Lélia, in 1964 ("Oh, she was beautiful: thin, large breasts, hallelujah!" I heard him say one time, turning his eyes upward), and then in São Paulo. For a short while afterward, he worked as an economist in the Ministry of Finance for São Paulo state. (As Salgado pointed out, he had experience in planning and financing large-scale projects long before the organizational feat of "Workers.") By 1968, the military government that had come to power in a coup four years earlier was evolving into a full-blown dictatorship, and the Salgados became part of a protest movement. The couple gave money to the A.L.N. (Ação Libertadora Nacional), the armed group led by Carlos Marighella, who is now best known as the author of the "Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla," a guide to terrorist techniques that influenced the tactics of the Baader-Meinhof group and the I.R.A. At this time, Salgado was a Communist, and a supporter of the Cuban revolution; he was never an A.L.N. member, but he did meet Marighella. (Salgado later regretted having told me about his A.L.N. connection, not for fear of seeming extreme but out of anxiety that he would appear to be dressing himself in radical chic.)

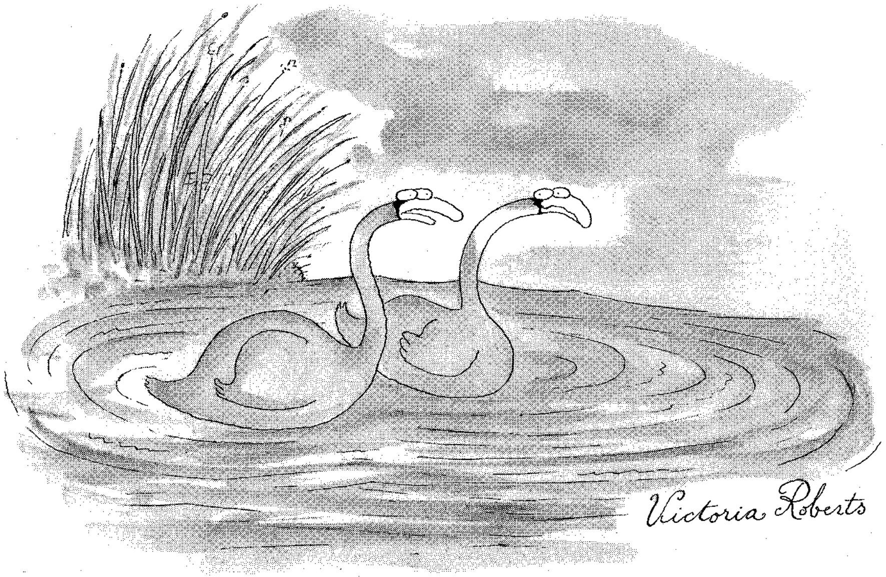
The authorities made no move against Sebastião and Lélia, but friends were arrested, and some of them were tortured. "We could either leave or become clandestine," Salgado said, and in 1968 the couple moved to Paris, where Sebastião studied for a Ph.D. in economics at the Sorbonne. Photographs taken at the time show him bearded, long-haired, and intense, looking much like the young Bjorn Borg. The Salgados remained politically active. Later, their Brazilian passports were revoked, and Salgado did not return to that country until 1979. "It was tough for my father," Salgado said. "When I left Brazil, he was a strong man. When I came back, he was an old man."

Lélia began a course in architecture, and in 1970 she bought a Pentax camera, to use in her studies. When Salgado first picked the camera up, that summer, he had never taken a photograph before. In his first, taken while on vacation in the southeast of France, Lélia is seen sitting on a window with the light behind her. "I knew when I looked inside this camera, now I had another way to relate with any kind of thing," Salgado told me. "It was so natural." After finishing his Ph.D. course work but before writing his thesis, Salgado accepted a well-paid job in London with the International Coffee Organization—coffee's OPEC—and began to work on a diversification fund designed to raise coffee prices by encouraging growers to move into other crops. He took Lélia's camera on field trips to Africa. "He was not satisfied with economics," Lélia remembered. "But he was very happy to take pictures."

Sebastião set up a darkroom in their apartment. "At first, it was just fun," Lélia recalled. One summer afternoon in



"Found meat is income."



"Maybe we mate for life because we're lazy."

• •

1972, he and Lélia rented a rowing boat in Hyde Park and went out on the Serpentine to discuss their future. "I'd studied many years and I had a very good job—hard to get this job—and I had an invitation to go to the World Bank in Washington," Salgado said. But he wanted to be a photographer. Lélia agreed he should try, despite the financial risks. When Salgado resigned from the I.C.O., soon after, his boss was exasperated by his apparent naïveté. "Of course you want to be a photographer," he said. "I want to be a photographer. My *wife* wants to be a photographer."

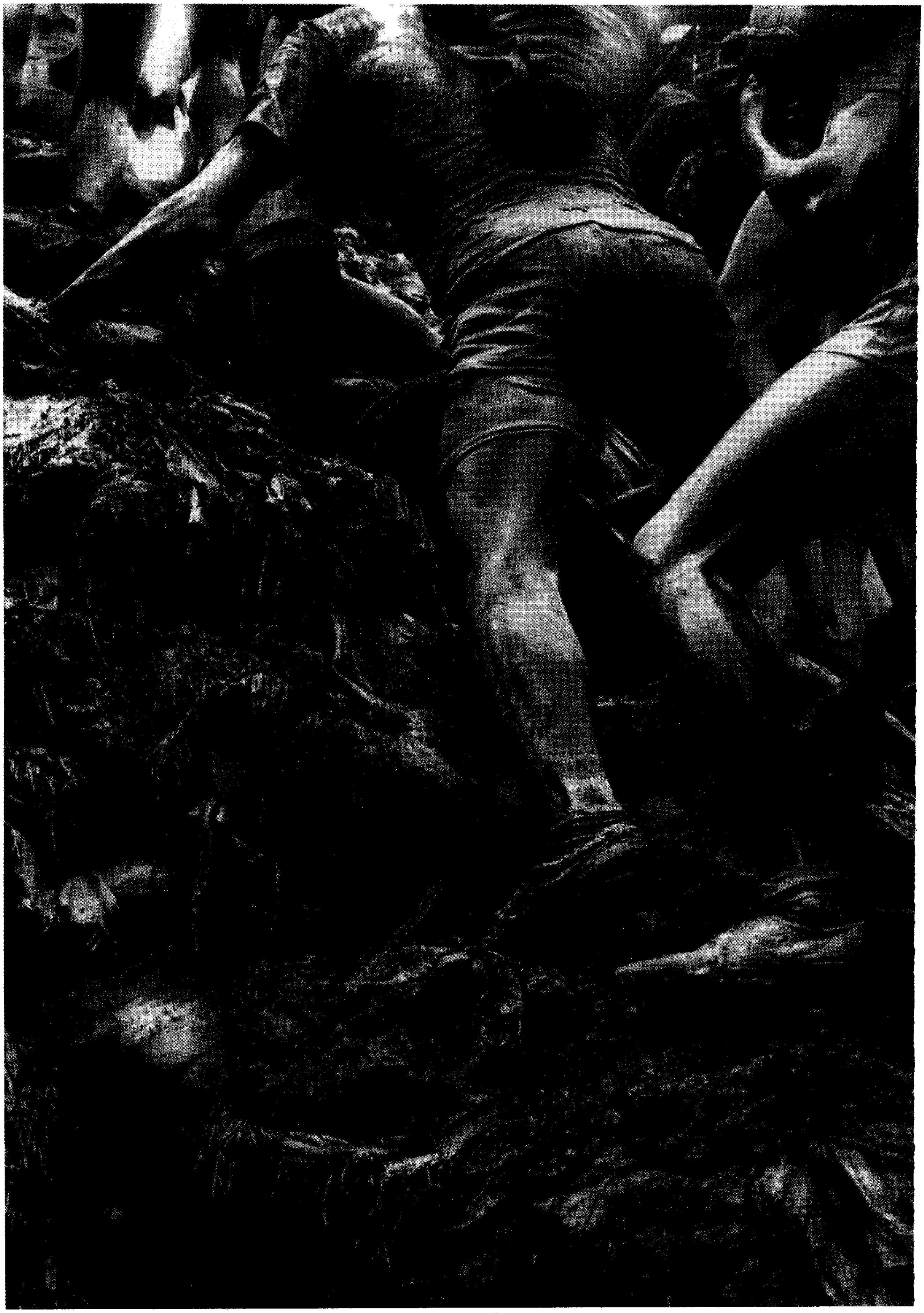
The Salgados moved back to Paris, and Salgado began to find work with trade-union and church magazines: he shot stories about migrant workers and the construction of the Pompidou Center. But, as Robert Pledge recently recalled, "he was lucky that Portuguese-speaking countries were very much in the news. That propelled him onto the circuit." Salgado was quickly taken on by the Sygma agency, and covered Portugal's Carnation Revolution, in 1974, and Angola's war of independence, which led to Portugal's withdrawal from the country, in 1975. And he did the everyday news stories and golf tournaments of an agency photographer. Pledge, who was then at the Gamma agency, which Salgado joined in 1975, could already detect Salgado's restlessness. "He quickly said, 'I don't want to do this all my life.' He was talking about not dealing with the news per se but *using* the news to deal with issues—poverty, injustice. That really struck me. That's not what young photographers said then."

Sebastião and Lélia's first son, Juliano, was born in 1974. Rodrigo, their second, was born in 1979. He had Down syndrome, a fact that his parents had not known during the pregnancy. Salgado told me that he cried for three hours after Rodrigo was born. The baby suffered from respiratory problems, and Lélia always kept him in her arms as he slept. "She thought he was going to die," Salgado told me. (Today, Rodrigo lives with his parents.) By now, Salgado was frequently working overseas; in 1979, he joined Magnum, the élite and coöperatively owned photo agency founded in 1947 by Robert Capa, with Henri Cartier-Bresson and others. Lélia told me, "It was hard. He thought I was strong, and could do it. And I *could* do it, but it was a lot—the house, the children, illness, all that." She never asked him to stop, and he never thought of changing the pace or the emphasis of his work, in order to spend more time in Paris. (Juliano Salgado, who now works in television and movies, and himself has a son, told me that he thought of his father as an "Indiana Jones figure.") In 1981, Salgado was on his way back from Australia when he accepted an assignment from the *Times* to spend three days photographing Ronald Reagan. When the President was shot, outside the Washington Hilton, Salgado was a few feet from the scene. Sales of Salgado's photographs from that day (he took seventy-six frames, with three cameras, in about a minute) made enough money for him to buy the apartment in Paris where he and Lélia still live, and, in an uncharacteristically flashy gesture, an Alfa Romeo Alfetta—"an incredibly nice car."

Late one evening, Tara's captain called us up to the bridge to see a single green dot on the radar: the first iceberg. And when we woke the next morning the ship was passing through a calm, wide channel with white mountains on either side. There was a hint of something sour and eggy in the air that we learned to recognize as the smell of massed penguins. Out of the wind, it barely felt colder than a December day in Central Park; and among the serious sailors there began a silent competition to see who could respond to Antarctica with the most non-specialist wardrobe, at least for a few minutes at a time: T-shirts, baggy cardigans, plaid slippers.

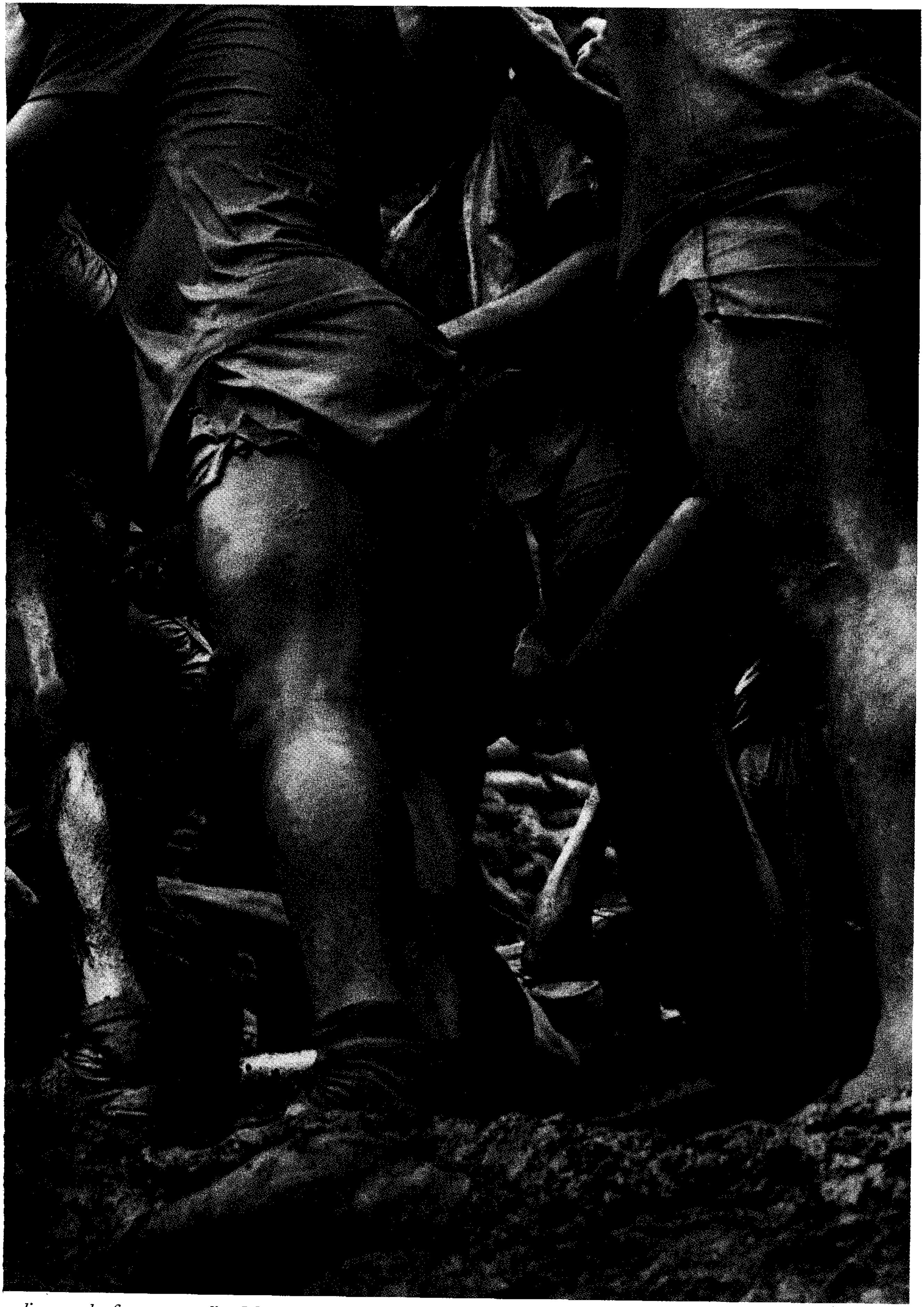
We were near the northern tip of the seven-hundred-mile-long Antarctic Peninsula, on the western side: a landscape of fjords and islands. This strand of Antarctica is relatively close to South America, and, because it is less cold than the mass of the continent, a dozen or so scientific bases have been built by various countries, at the kind of rocky coastal spots also valued by penguins. These few sheds and huts, along with some grander developments, on the other side of Antarctica, and a station at the South Pole, constitute virtually the only man-made environment, and therefore human population, of the continent, which is one and a half times the size of the United States. We dropped anchor close to the Chilean base of Gonzalez Videla. Salgado went on shore dressed in many layers of clothing and walked up a little icy slope, where he put on sunglasses, and said quietly, "I don't know if I can do this. It's too big." He was looking across at a panorama of sea and icebergs. Glaciers slipped straight into the sea, forming ice cliffs where they came to an end in the water. It looked as if a flood had rolled into a Himalayan valley. "I ask myself if it's possible to represent it by pictures," he said.

Salgado moved hesitantly off the ice onto dark rocks—you could feel your



AMAZONAS/CONTACT

Salgado's 1986 image of workers in the open pit of a mine at Serra Pelada, Brazil, a remote site in the Amazon where gold



n discovered a few years earlier. More than fifty thousand prospectors were at work in Serra Pelada.

pupils snap into dilation—and wandered among a colony of gentoo penguins. It was a world of bleakly reduced diversity: a penguin factory with few plants or insects. Dozens of penguins crouched on nests made of piled pebbles; above, a few predatory skuas circled, looking for unguarded penguin eggs or chicks. Now and then, a penguin would throw back its head and screech, sending a puff of condensation into the air.

Salgado makes frequent use of the word "dignity," and he gives it four syllables in English: dig-in-i-ty. He has often photographed people looking into his camera with a head-on stare that could be described as dignified reproach. It's a look that says, We are resourceful people, we can cope, but what you see is not good. (Salgado's efforts to represent his subjects this way may have inadvertently worked against a larger goal of encouraging social change; he has rarely shown people enraged by, or in revolutionary resistance to, their unhappy circumstances.) On the beach, Salgado seemed to be searching for a similar look in the wildlife. Freezing his position in the quarter-crouch of someone who has just begun to sit down, he waited for the penguins to look at him, and, when they did, it was hard not to project into their stare a silent plea for the Kyoto Protocol. (Some of the gorillas and tortoises he recently photographed gave him the same look.) "I didn't wish this from the beginning," Salgado said, talking of this preference for eye contact. "But I'm very interested in the animal. I pay attention to him, see what I can get from him—what is his face, what is his eyes, what his mind, what his preoccupation? Probably I can get this in pictures, *inshallah*."

Salgado stopped in front of a penguin that was feeding two infants by regurgitation, and he became absorbed by the sight. "She's so proud of them," he said. He asked for his tripod. He looked and waited, and each time the adult forced its beak down the throat of an infant he took five or six photographs, and his singing became louder. When he moved away, after an hour or so, during which a fearless small white bird had pecked at my boot fifty times, he said, "It was perfect, the head on one side, the tail on the other." Describing how he had constructed the image, he swept his hands in the air balletically, then drew in my notebook: the adult bird and the infant below it were together curled into the frame, as if into a Matisse collage, forming a low, condensed "S."

Before we left the beach, Salgado watched a penguin build a nest by carrying pebbles in its beak, one by one. When we were back on the ship, he said, "Photography is this disease, this thing that you fix inside you; you go and you go. We're like these birds. Get a stone to put there, get another stone to put there, until he has a nest. We do the same.

"The 'decisive moment,' it's just a slice," Salgado said, using a phrase associated with Cartier-Bresson, who was a friend of the Salgados. (A signed Cartier-Bresson print—a tree-lined country road—is one of the few photographs on the walls of their Paris apartment; another is a picture of the soccer legends Franz Beckenbauer and Pelé talking to one another, naked, in a postgame communal shower.) Salgado drew two axes of a graph on a sheet of paper, and then a sine curve (signifying the photographed phenomenon), with a horizontal tangent at the top (the photograph). The economist and the photojournalist were now collaborating. "You have a tangent that's just touching the most perfect moment of the phenomenon," he said. "That's the concept of the decisive moment. But, for me, the most important idea isn't to have the tangent that's zero." (He wrote this out: "∞ = 0.") "If you're a smart guy, with a good camera, with a good eye, you come from outside the phenomenon, and—*tuk*—you get the fabulous image. But long-term stories are composed of a lot of different waves. The most important thing for me is not whether the tangent is zero, or minus one, or plus one, but to work *inside* the phenomenon. You are living the phenomenon, and each click is one point. You do your click at the strongest moment, of course, when you have the perfect light, the perfect albatross, the perfect mountain—but then this is another, this is another." He drew more curves, each one bristling with tangents, and then an overarching curve that encompassed them all. (It has sometimes been thought, even by his friends, that Salgado could cut down on the multitude of tangents. "Salgado is a good editor, but sometimes his books are a little too fat," Robert Pledge said.)

Salgado did not invent the long-term documentary photographic story. As he told me, "Guys like W. Eugene Smith worked for years on projects." But Smith—to take Salgado's example—was a *Life* staff photographer for much of his career, and struggled to finance his later independent projects. Salgado, who took up photography several years before Smith's death, began working in an era when few, if any, magazines can underwrite multiple tangents from a single photographer. The challenge was to find a way to work as if you had a mid-century *Life* contract when you did not.

"I found it frustrating to shoot one story and jump to another," Salgado said. He wanted to work symphonically. (In fact, he has looked for a composer to write music to accompany "Genesis.") One way to slow the pace was to work in partnership with organizations like the World Council of Churches, as he has done since the beginning of his career. In 1984 and 1985, he took photographs in Africa's drought-affected Sahel region, in collaboration with Médecins Sans Frontières, which received proceeds from a subsequent book.

Another strategy was to tack personal stories onto commissioned ones. Salgado's 1986 trip to the Serra Pelada gold mine, for example, was made between assignments in South America for two German magazines. Gold had been discovered at the remote site—Serra Pelada means "bald mountains"—several years earlier, attracting more than fifty thousand prospectors, and, in turn, the attention of the media. *Time* had compared the mine to an "outlandish biblical epic movie"; the Chilean-born artist Alfredo Jaar had shown photographs of the mine at the 1986 Venice Biennale. "*Everybody* had shot this story before me," Salgado said. But, as Robert Pledge remembered it, Salgado said, "I want to do it in black-and-white, for the record. It's my country, after all." He went there for three weeks and shot all day. Because the story was hardly breaking news, it was another six months before Salgado took the time to look at the photos he had taken. Even then, he said, "I thought they were O.K. The reaction was a big surprise."

The photographs were published first in the *Sunday Times* magazine, in London. "He made his name on that story," Colin Jacobson, a leading British photo editor, and the founder of the magazine *Reportage*, recently recalled. "It was phenome-

ARE WE THERE YET?

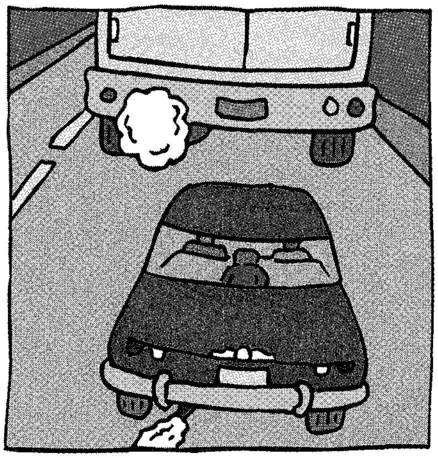
COUNTDOWN

In 1969, the drive from Minneapolis to St. Louis took twelve hours and was mostly on two-lane roads. My parents woke me up for it at dawn. We had just spent an outstandingly fun week with my Minnesota cousins, but as soon as we pulled out of my uncle's driveway these cousins evaporated from my mind like the morning dew from the hood of our car. I was alone in the back seat again. I went to sleep, and my mother took out her magazines, and the weight of the long July drive fell squarely on my father.

To get through the day, he made himself into an algorithm, a number cruncher. Our car was the axe with which he attacked the miles listed on road signs, chopping the nearly unbearable 238 down to a still daunting 179, bludgeoning the 150s and 140s and 130s until they yielded the halfway humane 127, which was roundable down to 120, which he could pretend was just two hours of driving time even though, with so many livestock trucks and thoughtless drivers on the road ahead of him, it would probably take closer to three. Through sheer force of will, he mowed down the last twenty miles between him and double digits, and these digits he then reduced by tens and twelves until, finally, he could glimpse it: "Cedar Rapids 34." Only then, as his sole treat of the day, did he allow himself to remember that 34 was the distance to the *city center*—that we were, in fact, less than thirty miles now from the oak-shaded park where we liked to stop for a picnic lunch.

The three of us ate quietly. My father took the pit of a damson plum out of his mouth and dropped it into a paper bag, fluttering his fingers a little. He was wishing he'd pressed on to Iowa City—Cedar Rapids wasn't even the halfway point—and I was wishing we were back in the air-conditioned car. Cedar Rapids felt like outer space to me. The warm breeze was someone else's breeze, not mine, and the sun overhead was a harsh reminder of the day's relentless waning, and the park's unfamiliar oak trees all spoke to our deep nowhereness. Even my mother didn't have much to say.

But the really interminable drive was through southeastern Iowa. My father remarked on the height of the corn, the blackness of the soil, the need for better roads. My mother lowered the front-seat armrest and played crazy eights with me until I was just as sick of it as she was. Every few miles a pig farm. Another ninety-degree bend in the road. Another truck with fifty cars behind it. Each time my father floored the accelerator and swung out to pass, my mother drew frightened breath:



SEYMOUR CHWAST

"Fffff!

"Ffff*ffff!*

"Fffff—*FFFFFFFFFF!*—OH! EARL! OH! Fff*fff!*"

There was white sun in the east and white sun in the west. Aluminum domes of silos white against white sky. It seemed as if we'd been driving steadily downhill for hours, careering toward an ever-receding green furriness at the Missouri state line. Terrible that it could still be afternoon. Terrible that we were still in Iowa. We had left behind the convivial planet where my cousins lived, and we were plummeting south toward a quiet, dark, air-conditioned house in which I didn't even recognize loneliness as loneliness, it was so familiar to me.

My father hadn't said a word in fifty miles. He silently accepted another plum from my mother and, a moment later, handed her the pit. She unrolled her window and flung the pit into a wind suddenly heavy with a smell of tornadoes. What looked like diesel exhaust was rapidly filling the southern sky. A darkness gathering at three in the afternoon. The endless downslope steepening, the tasselled corn tossing, and everything suddenly green—sky green, pavement green, parents green.

My father turned on the radio and sorted through crashes of static to find a station. He had remembered—or maybe never forgotten—that another descent was in progress. There was static on static on static, crazy assaults on the signal's integrity, but we could hear men with Texan accents reporting lower and lower elevations, counting the mileage down toward zero. Then a wall of rain hit our windshield with a roar like deep-fry. Lightning everywhere. Static smashing the Texan voices, the rain on our roof louder than the thunder, the car shimmying in lateral gusts.

"Earl, maybe you should pull over," my mother said. "Earl?"

He had just passed milepost 2, and the Texan voices were getting steadier, as if they'd figured out that the static couldn't hurt them: that they were going to make it. And, indeed, the wipers were already starting to squeak, the road drying out, the black clouds shearing off into harmless shreds. "The Eagle has landed," the radio said. We'd crossed the state line. We were back home on the moon.

—*Jonathan Franzen*

Gahan Wilson

"Gee, I always figured him for No. 1!"

• •

nal. The photographs had that apocalyptic feel—they conveyed a contemporary living hell. They were brilliant photographs. I think they are still his very best work."

The Serra Pelada photographs helped Salgado move ahead with an ambitious idea: to compile a giant almanac of physical labor—tuna fishermen in Sicily, coal miners in India, and many others. The project, whose full title is "Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age," took six years. It was shot globally (in twenty-six countries) and distributed globally; the pictures were instantly legible, as sad and catchy and broadly appealing as an Elton John song. "Workers" had the seductive ambition of comprehensiveness; it wanted to show the whole earth, like those first, blue shots of the world seen from space. And by sheer force of composition, it seemed, Salgado was looking to find coherence in a combination of social optimism and social pessimism. These were romantic photographs of what the Marxist economist in Salgado knew to be the exploitation of labor. "History is above all a succession of challenges, of repetitions, of perseverances," he wrote in the introduction to the book in which the photographs were collected. "It's an endless cycle of oppressions, humiliations, and disasters, but also a testament to man's ability to survive."

"Workers" was a feat of financing as much as it was an achievement in thoroughness, and in sustained seriousness. (Salgado has never taken a photograph that could not be accompanied, in a television documentary, by the sound of a solo cello.) "He really took charge of his own career," Jacobson said. "He became a production person, providing stories on his own terms." Salgado explained to me that he persuaded several magazines to sign up for the stories in "Workers" in advance, "so it was possible to cover my budget and produce my stories, completely free to produce my stories. No one magazine had priority. I organized this. *This* is economics." It has been said that more people saw "Workers," in its various travelling exhibitions, than any other show in the history of photography.

Salgado has sometimes had an awkward relationship with other photographers. "When you produce a lot, you take a lot of space, and people are afraid of you," he said to me. In the early nineteen-nineties, as Salgado finished "Workers" and began his next project—a study of displaced people, known as "Migrations"—his relationship with Magnum ended. As he remembered it, "Oh boy, a big, big fight." Although the conflict seems to have had its roots in resentment of Salgado's new fame, and his perceived egotism, it took the particular form of a disagreement about internal reforms of Magnum. Salgado had suggested restructuring the agency: dividing the photojournalists from the art photographers; he also wanted each photographer to make a greater financial investment in the coöperative. These ideas were resisted. Despite a moment when Cartier-Bresson, then in his eighties, sought to prevent Salgado from leaving a Magnum meeting by barring the way with his body, Salgado resigned, and formed Amazonas with Lélia. "I knew that if I don't leave Magnum I will die," he told me. "Not that I will die physically, but I will die like many of the old Magnum photographers who were dead—because they were not photographers anymore, they were eating each other, fighting, politics. Because photographers must be out shooting, the planet is there to do incredible stories, and to see these photographers sixty years old, sixty-five years old, you know, become completely bitter—for me, that is death."

Each day on board Tara, Salgado woke up early and photographed all day. He made the claim—it seemed implausible at first—that his mind never wandered. He said that he never day-dreamed about his family, his taxes, or Brazilian soccer, which he still follows. He was able to look, and do nothing but look. He said that he saw the world in black-and-white. ("The lettuce, that's gray," he told me during lunch one day. "The pie is pale gray. The wine is black.") Salgado has a recurring irritation in his left eye, because he keeps it squeezed shut for so much of the time.

In Antarctica, the sun still shone at eleven o'clock in the evening, so when Salgado went onshore he worked long days. For his companions, who could move neither too far ahead nor too far behind, for fear of wandering into Salgado's frame, the days sometimes seemed even longer. It was like being tied to him by a rope. Then, one afternoon, four of us *were* tied to him by a rope, as we walked up a gently sloping glacier above a small British base called Port Lockroy, our boots breaking through a crust of hard ice to the icy mush beneath. Salgado walked second to last in line. He stopped and started and stopped again, as he sought to compensate for the fact that the right side of the view did not quite do justice to the left. (Some dark bare rocks interrupted a white curve of ice.) The four of us were bound to stop and start, too; when he looked at the view, we looked at the same view. The sky was as clear and blue as the view from an aircraft at thirty thousand feet. As we moved higher up the glacier, and the scene became more and more to Salgado's liking, his tugs on the rope became more frequent. He brought us to a halt as if we were sled dogs. Some hours into the walk, we changed order and Salgado was given the lead.

Some similar rearranging had happened, on a larger scale, during the first days in Antarctica, when one could see a discrepancy between those who saw the trip as a vacation—or an extreme-sports adventure—and Salgado's more meditative ideas about travelling. When he was alone on deck, Salgado would sometimes say, "The guys below are probably missing one of the most beautiful things of their lives." His intensity, when working, could inspire a kind of shame in one's own lack of stamina, and in one's willingness to read and gossip rather than at all times commune with the scenery. It was like visiting an art gallery with someone able to study a single portrait for a full afternoon. In contrast to Salgado, the rest of us took photographs that seemed to be a kind of defense against the unease that can creep into our response to the sublime—a shield against the guilt attached to not knowing how to fix one's gaze on something spectacular that one will never see again.

Salgado's shipmates wanted to meet goals—to get as high above Antarctica as possible, or as far below, or as far south as the ice would allow. But they could not lose themselves inside the landscape as he could. The alpine guide flew low over the boat in an engine-powered paraglider that he had carried from France. The sailor with the trumpet played "La Vie en Rose" loudly on the deck, the sound bouncing off the icebergs around us. We drank cocktails, listened to reggae, and watched Bourgois take pleasure in the task of nosing Tara through the slabs of ice that were becoming denser as we moved south. Salgado was puzzled by the hurry and noise. "We're not here to go on an autoroute," he said. "So maybe we won't see three things, but we *will* see this one thing." In what seemed a warning about the easygoing mood on board the boat, one day we heard an unnerving exchange over the open channel on the radio—a doctor giving instructions in English to people nearby who were evidently caring for someone very seriously injured. We later learned that a British man, a successful businessman sailing his own yacht, had died after falling down a crevasse at the glacier where we had been roped together.

Salgado also became frustrated by the influence that the two men from the French TV show were having on Tara's movements. Salgado liked them personally, but their hunger for footage aggravated him. One morning, after the ship had sailed as far down the peninsula as possible before being stopped by ice, and had then turned around, we came to a sudden stop at the sight of a leopard seal on a low-riding iceberg. One of the TV men took an inflatable boat to film it. (In the rush to get the dinghy launched, Bourgois's cousin fell into the water; after a moment, he was back on deck.) At the time, Salgado was standing at the bow, studying the way that the light was falling on the ice cliffs. "I was concentrating," he later said. "With all this ice breaking in the water, completely different shapes were forming, and I started to see a huge megalopolis, a huge town, incredible city, with vertical shapes, with round shapes—all geometric forms. I was organizing my mind inside this space, and the light was so nice, so beautiful, because we had some shafts going inside the ice, and made volume. Then they break for the *phoque*, and they destroyed me!" (For "seal," Salgado switched to French, and seemed to enjoy spitting out the word.) "It broke completely my concentration," he said.

Salgado went down into the main cabin. "We must talk about this," he said to Bourgois politely. Later that day, at a meeting around the ship's dining table, Salgado complained about the perceived encroachment of the TV show's agenda. (Bourgois had given him the impression that he was the only person on board paying for more than living costs, although the French program had, in fact, made a similar contribution.) He also pressed for greater environmental seriousness. "We have to show more respect to the environment," he said. "This is a UNEP boat, an environmental boat, we can't be agitating animals. We can't be making a noise." Salgado was quiet when others spoke; he examined a little dispenser of colored Post-it tabs being used by the television director, Gil Kebaili, to mark pages in a glossy book on Antarctica. (There were several of these books on board, but Salgado never opened them, being keen to avoid visual preconceptions: "I'm completely open for what comes, I have no organized idea." He made an exception only for the work of Frank Hurley, the photographer on Shackleton's expedition.)

Salgado had the deck to himself that afternoon, and a new authority. Tara had evolved into a taxi. When Kebaili came up on deck, he did not carry his camera.

Paging through the "Migrations" book at Tara's dining table one morning, Salgado commented on a double-page photograph of Rwandan refugees in makeshift tents in Tanzania in 1994, under a sky that looked almost black in some areas, and almost white in others. "The situation is unbelievable, and the light is unbelievable," he said, softly, and the adjective had to make a sudden change in complexion between its two appearances.

It is often said that photographers like Salgado run a risk when they turn poverty and discomfort into well-composed images. According to this line of criticism, the beauty of a Salgado photograph can smother, or cheapen, the human woe represented. (Salgado finds this response maddening, and once considered hiring a lawyer after such an attack was published.) A related argument takes issue with such photographs migrating from their traditional places of distribution—that is, magazines and newspapers—to lose their captions and become a commodity traded in galleries, bought by museums, and hung above water beds in penthouse apartments. In one of the least guarded of these kinds of complaint, *Le Monde* once described a Paris exhibition of Salgado's "Migrations" photographs as "nauseating" and "kitsch," in an article that ran under the headline "SALGADO, OR THE EXPLOITATION OF COMPASSION." ("They were trying to kill him," Lélia said to me.) In response, Salgado insists that his photographs are not as calculated as his critics imagine. "I don't know how to make an un-composition, if there is this word in English," he said to me. "It comes naturally. That must be very hard, the most hard thing in the planet. You work in a space! You have a space, you must deal with it, you must have some harmony in this space."

Salgado—who does sell prints, but in unlimited editions, with the exception of a planned edition of "Genesis" prints, and who has always aimed for as wide a distribution of his images as possible—suggested to me that his Brazilian birth protects him from some of the issues of conscience that may trouble photojournalists from First World countries. By contrast, he said, a British photojournalist such as Don McCullin, whom Salgado admires, must take into account that "he comes from a country that went to India, went to Africa, and the British owe a debt, for what they did around the world." He continued, "When I was young and part of the Communist Party, we worked very close to the part of the society that was less privileged in Brazil. I come from this. And when I show these pictures I'm showing a problem that I am *inside*. And I never made money with these things. The money went back into photography, or into social projects." (Salgado appears to be far less materialistic than his earning power could permit, beyond showing a warm appreciation of well-made things that allow him to function more efficiently in his work. When I asked him to tell me about the extravagances in his life, he thought for a while and then said, "I have about twenty penknives.")

The afternoon after the chastening of the TV crew, Tara was cruising on still water when Salgado looked down a side channel that ended in a glacier and asked that the ship be turned into it. There were, in fact, glaciers in every direction, but Salgado was struck by something in the combination of the ice, the mountains that framed it, the clouds hanging onto the mountains, and the dark gray of the sea directly in front of the ice cliffs. Given the clarity of the dry air, and the absence of people (we saw perhaps a single boat a day) and almost all plant and animal life, it was difficult to judge distances; it seemed possible that the photograph Salgado envisaged could be taken at a spot a few miles away.

As we moved toward the glacier, the temperature fell and the wind rose from nothing to forty knots. The sea turned choppy. What had felt like a bracing day at the top of a ski lift took on a threatening texture. Salgado was thrilled. "The light was flat, flat, but now we're in orbit," he said, after taking a picture.

The cold became extreme; the wind screamed off the glacier. "Oh, what a magnificent thing!" Salgado said, guiding the captain, who was standing seventy feet behind him, with mittened hands, like an airport worker guiding a jet to a gate. The sea in front had turned almost black. The wind cut through a dozen layers of clothes. Salgado's nose ran, and he could barely move his fingers when he changed films; the cold cracked the skin around his fingernails.

The glacier was, in fact, many miles away. We sailed until we were directly under jagged hundred-and-fifty-foot ice cliffs. Then Salgado shouted, "Stop, stop." The wind dropped suddenly—we were now sheltered by the cliffs—and Salgado raised his hands above his head, and formed the "T" of a time-out. He was done. "This is the best photograph I've taken so far," he said. "Here I'll see what I was looking for when I came here. One picture I have. Now I only need forty-nine."

W. Eugene Smith, the *Life* photographer, once acknowledged that he was "always torn between the attitude of the journalist, who is a recorder of facts, and the artist, who is often necessarily at odds with the facts." Salgado makes no similar acknowledgment. "I'm *not* an artist," he told me. "An artist makes an object. Me, it's not an object, I work in history, I'm a storyteller."

We were walking through freezing drizzle on Deception Island, a horseshoe of volcanic rock and ice, a last stopping point on our way north toward a rendezvous at the peninsula's sole, gravel airstrip, on King George Island, where a plane was due to pick up Bourgois and a few others, including myself. "I can be an artist a posteriori, not a priori," Salgado said. "If my pictures tell the story, our story, human story, then in a hundred years, *then* they can be considered an art reference, but now they are not made as art. I'm a journalist. My life's on the road, my studio is the planet." He recalled a carved pot for grain storage that he had recently seen in an exhibition of African art. "It was so well carved, so well done. It was not built as art, it was built for their life, and *became* art. I believe the pictures that I do are the same thing. They have a function. I tell a story. I'm telling about the shit of this planet, or we will not survive as a people."

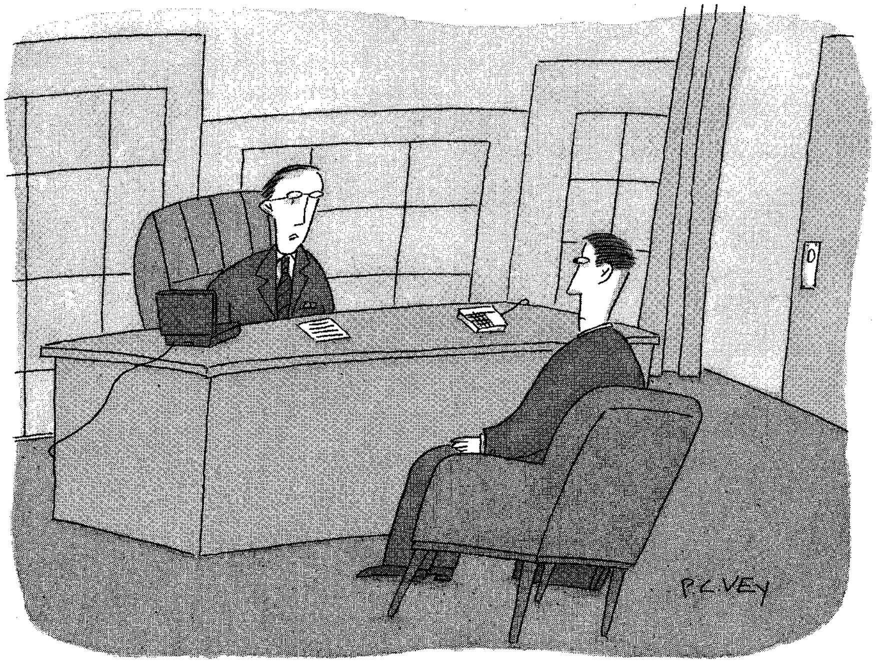
When Salgado, who is forever in search of beauty, insists on being understood only as a reporter, he risks sounding like Keats claiming no more than an ornithological interest in nightingales—and perhaps he should not be taken too seriously. But while there is a kind of modesty in the stance, there is also a hint of immodesty in imagining that one's singular vision of the world will be accepted as transparent and purely practical—although Salgado has always been helped in that claim by his audience's knowledge that he is a former economist who takes his politics seriously. (For example, the critic David Levi Strauss has written that Salgado's work is substantially different from "most social documentary work," owing to "his background in Brazil and his understanding, as an economist, of the social and political background of the people and situations he photographs.”)

Just as “Workers” and “Migrations” did not have explicit political messages but, rather, seemed to have bold compendiousness as their governing principles, the agenda of “Genesis” is somewhat opaque. Salgado is ecologically serious, as the Instituto Terra suggests, but it would worry some environmentalists to hear him take encouragement from the sheer abundance of glaciers in Antarctica. (Where others see shrinking ice, Salgado saw a ton of ice.) Salgado has said that “Genesis” will include photographs not just of animals but of people living technologically simple lives in the Amazon basin and elsewhere. He told me that he was aiming to show the earth as it was some four thousand years ago—although it was not clear why he had chosen that date rather than, say, forty thousand years ago. It’s not yet obvious what “Genesis” is, and how it will not be “Planète Cousteau”; and it seems significant that when the *Guardian*, for example, has run these new photographs the accompanying story has been about Salgado’s visit to the place. Travelling to the ends of the earth, he becomes the center of attention.

The truth, of course, is that Salgado’s work has an emotional impact—not least in its underlying argument for a sense of common humanity, or common animality—that is separate from its informational load. (This fact is acknowledged when Salgado publishes captions at the back of his books, rather than against each image.) One can know the Serra Pelada photographs well but still be surprised when Salgado talks about the actual daily routine, and the social background, of those miners. And it’s interesting to see the contact sheets from that story, neatly filed among the others in Paris. The most famous Serra Pelada photograph—perhaps the best-known Salgado photograph—is one that is referred to in his office as “The Hand.” A miner has reached the top of a ladder, with a sack of dirt on his back, and the pit below him. He is pulling himself up the last step. The hand of another man is reaching into the frame, apparently in the direction of the straining miner, in a way that echoes an older composition, on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. (“A hand, open, reaches out from nowhere to the miner struggling up the slope, flattened by his burden,” Eduardo Galeano wrote in an essay for a 1990 Salgado retrospective.) But it’s odd to learn from the comic strip of before-and-after provided by the contact sheet that the stray hand is not actually reaching; it’s the hand of someone walking ahead of the subject, caught mid-swing.

As we walked on Deception Island, through the mist, Salgado talked about Serra Pelada—a fairly large group of those miners were raising money for sex changes, he said—and then, in a relaxed, pre-photograph mood, he led the group in “Cucurrucucú Paloma,” the traditional Mexican song performed by Caetano Veloso in the Pedro Almódovar film “Talk to Her.” (Veloso is a friend.) At midday, he did an interview with French radio via the satellite telephone, which he otherwise used to call Lélia each evening. When he finished, we turned a corner to find that we were looking along a ridge that curved up and around in the shape of a Nike swoosh flipped upside down; one side of the ridge rose gently from a long, broad valley, and the other swept steeply down to a beach of black sand. All across the valley, and along the ridge, chinstrap penguins were standing on pebble nests evenly spaced a foot or so from each other, in colonies of a hundred or five hundred or a thousand, like subdivisions in a suburban sprawl. We could see perhaps two hundred and fifty thousand birds. “Amazing,” said Salgado, more excited than I’d seen him before.

Part of the appeal of penguins is that they choose to live where people would live if they colonized the same space, and they live on the ground, and they walk at a human pace. Looking over the valley, we could see countless birds making their way down paths to the sea; small paths led to wider ones, and these emptied into a main thoroughfare that took the birds down to the beach, where they dived into the surf to fish, becoming as agile as dolphins. Each wave slung onto the sand a dozen or so penguins that had finished feeding; as they came out of the water they immediately lost their marine grace, and then began struggling up the same paths to return to their nests. Thousands were moving in each direction. The noise of their screeching echoed across the valley—the sound of a hall with a high ceiling packed with people shouting. “The Serra Pelada of penguins,” Salgado said, making the unavoidable comparison, even at the slight moral risk of connecting Brazilian laborers with flightless seabirds. “Never in my life have I seen something so beautiful. Incredible, incredible, incredible.” He raised his arms in front of the view, and said something I didn’t catch, and then explained, “It was a voodoo word. I’m asking for light. I’m asking for this mist to open, asking nature to open for me, because I need the light. It will come.” When it did, he said, “Thank you, God.” ♦



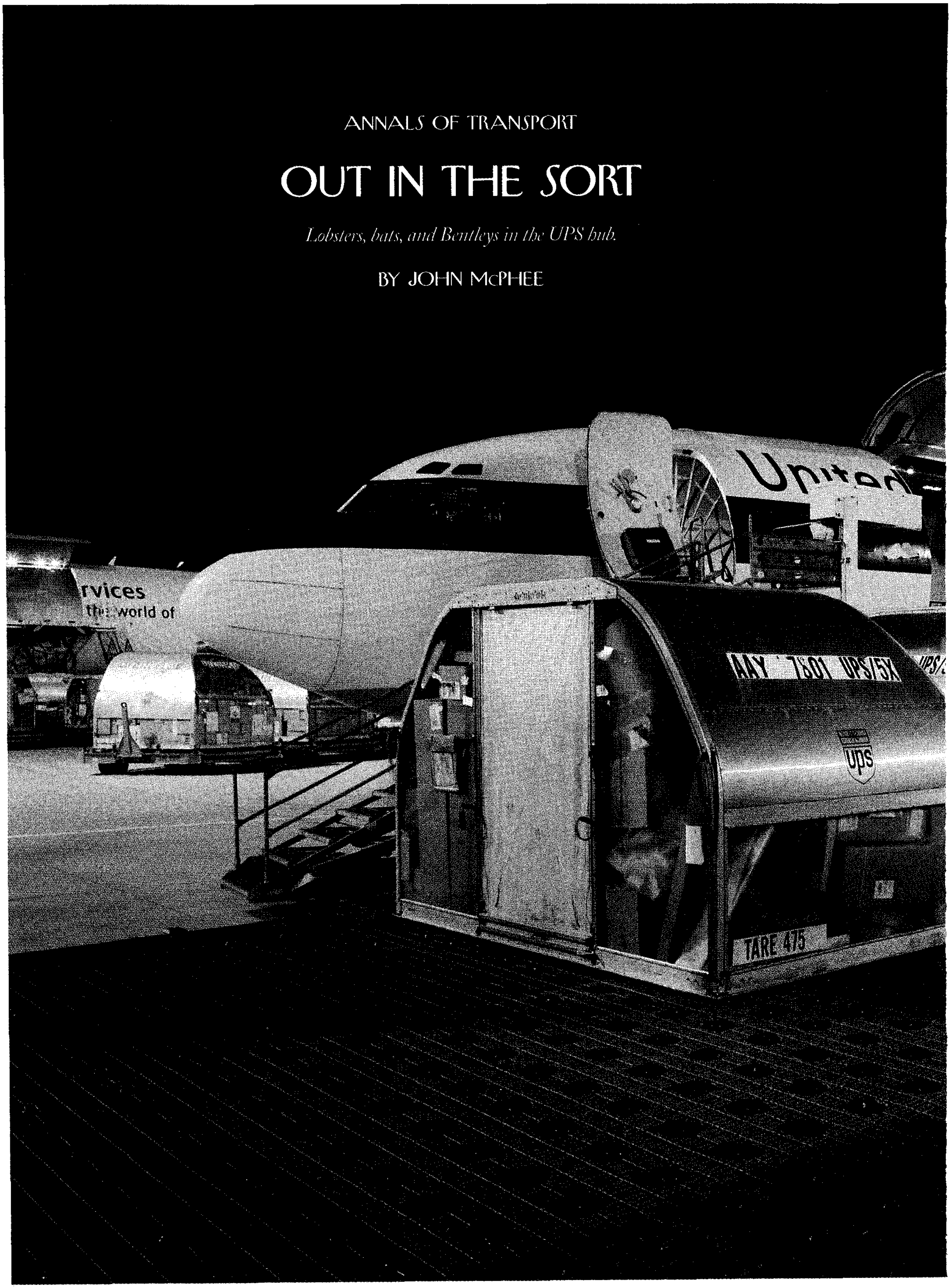
“You’ll be a perfect addition to our expendable workforce.”

ANNALS OF TRANSPORT

OUT IN THE SORT

Lobsters, bats, and Bentleys in the UPS hub.

BY JOHN McPHEE


United
rvices
the world of
AAY 7601 UPS/5X
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TARE 475

Some five thousand employees—including college students and pilots—come to work in the main UPS hub every night, but, if

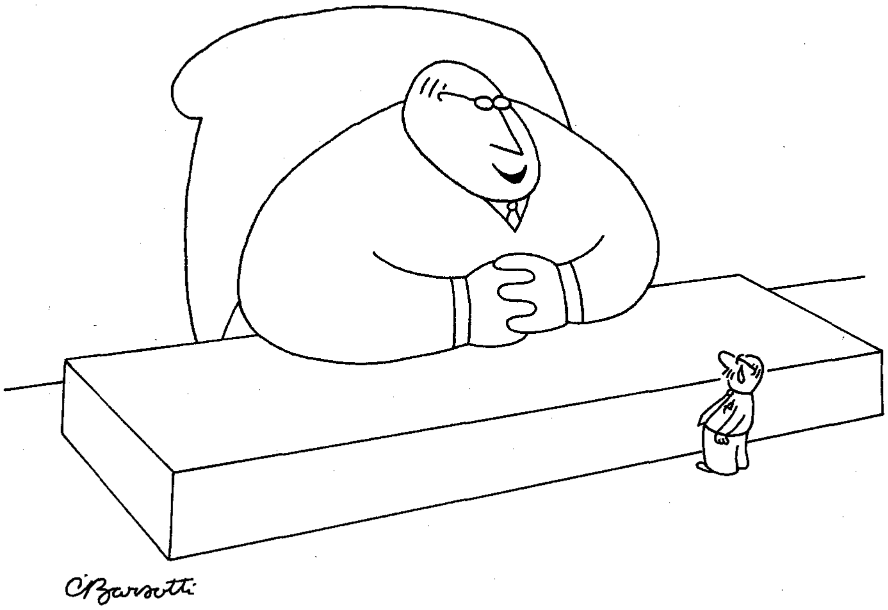
Service
AAY 78494 UPS/SK
TARE WT 478
Lantis

well, few of them will ever touch a package. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

In an all but windowless building beside the open ocean in Arichat, Nova Scotia, a million lobsters are generally in residence, each in a private apartment where temperatures are maintained just above the freeze point. In a great high-ceilinged room known as the Dryland Pound, the lobster apartments are in very tall stacks, thirty-four levels high, divided by canyonlike streets. The size of the individual dwellings varies according to the size of the inhabitants; and there in the cold dark, alone, they use almost no energy and are not able to chew off their neighbors' antennae or twist off their neighbors' claws, as lobsters will do in a more gregarious setting. The cold water comes down from above and, in a patented way, circulates through the apartments as if they were a series of descending Moorish pools. Beguiled into thinking it is always winter, the lobsters remain hard, do not molt when summer comes, and may repose in Arichat for half a year before departing for Kentucky.

They belong to a company called Clearwater Seafoods, which collects them from all over the Maritime Provinces, including Nova Scotia's Cape Breton County, where Arichat is, on an island called Madame. Clearwater has a number of offshore licenses, its deep-sea trawlers fifty to two hundred miles out, tending mile-long lines of traps, and enhancing Clearwater's catch of lobsters that weigh three to fifteen pounds. A twenty-plus-pounder is rare but not unknown.

Sixty people work in the Arichat plant, sometimes around the clock. The manager is a big rugged guy named David George, who was wearing an N.Y.P.D. T-shirt when I met him and who summed up his operation, saying, "We go through a shitload of lobsters in a two-month period." From Clearwater's headquarters in Bedford, beside Halifax, I had driven up to Arichat with Mark Johnson, manager of Clearwater Lobster Merchants, New Covent Garden Market, Battersea; Dominique Bael, of Clearwater's La Homarderie, Quai des Usines, Brussels; and Marc Keats, the company's chief of European lobster sales. Lobsters were arriving at the rate of a hundred thousand a day, and each acceptable newcomer—its antennae waving, its carapace glistening—was given discrete space on a conveyor belt



"O.K., O.K., Wilkins, on behalf of all alpha males I apologize."

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designed to advance its journey toward someone's distant mouth. The sensitized, computerized belt was, among other things, weighing the lobsters and assigning each by weight to one of sixteen grades. Lobsters graded "select" weigh between two and two and a half pounds. Chix all weigh just over or under a pound and are graded as large chix, medium chix, and small chix. A large quarter is a pound-and-a-quarter lobster that is an ounce or two on the heavy side. A small quarter is a light one. A large half weighs a little over 1.6 pounds. As the lobsters fly along the conveyor belt, computer-brained paddles reach out and sweep them variously left or right off the belt and into chutes that lead to large trays partitioned to accommodate lobsters of their exact heft. Biologists hover around the belt. The lobsters have a long way to live.

Clearwater once shipped lobsters to a Nobel Prize dinner. The company's delivered price was cheaper than the price of Swedish lobsters. Now and again, a lobster with claws the size of bed pillows goes to Japan to be featured in a display, but what the Japanese want in steady volume are chix. The world at large wants chix and quarters. Americans, almost alone, want the big ones. Clearwater lobsters go weekly to Guam. They go to Tel Aviv, Bangkok, Osaka, Los Angeles, Sioux Falls, Phoenix, Denver, Missoula, Little Rock, Brooklyn, and Boston. Lobsters are to Christmas dinners in France what turkeys are in America. On the eve of Christmas Eve, planes heading east for Paris have almost infinitely more lobsters in them than human beings. In annual consumption of lobsters, France is No. 1 in Europe. Clearwater has two customers in France, and is not looking hard for a third. An impression seems to be that the French are cheap and they want cheap lobsters. Moreover, when invoices go out it's a long time to the first euro. You will not find an ad for Clearwater in *Cuisine et Vins de France*. Christmas is also lobster time in much of the rest of Europe, and even in Asia. Lobsters are routed from the Dryland Pound to Louisville to Anchorage to Seoul. They go to Mexico, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Spain. By the truckload, they go to Maine!

Four hundred thousand pounds a year pass through Clearwater's reservoir in New Covent Garden, Mark Johnson remarked, while we watched three-pounders and four-pounders scrolling by on their way to Las Vegas. In England, he mainly sells large quarters. Marks & Spencer is his biggest customer. Second is British Airways. On a *Restaurant Magazine* list of the fifty finest restaurants in the world, thirteen were in England, and six of those were customers of Clearwater lobsters.

The rationale of the Dryland Pound is to make hard, healthy lobsters available to the market year round, overcoming the impediments of Clearwater's short fishing seasons and nature's cyclical shrinking of lobsters' internal meat. The Clearwater harvest takes place for a couple of months in springtime and again in November-December. The harvest in Maine takes place all year. When a lobster becomes so fully meated that it begins to overcrowd its carapace, it molts—generally in summer. First, its meat shrinks radically and is softened by absorbed water. The shrivelled and softened flesh is able to come out of the shell. In Halifax, these rudiments were reviewed for us by Sharon Cameron, a biologist on the faculty of Clearwater's Lobster University, whose students were company personnel and customers on visits to headquarters from around the world. Recovery—the regrowth of flesh and the hardening of the new and larger shell—requires two months. As lobsters age and grow—five to seven years for each pound—years can go by between molts. The premium, tenderest lobsters are within a few months of their recovery after molting. Clearwater harvests only hard lobsters. Since there is no way to tell if a hard lobster molted three months ago or three years ago, chefs undercook the big ones, because they are tenderest when raw.

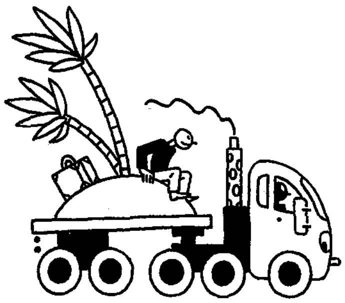
Professor Cameron slipped a needle into the belly of a lobster, drew blood, and squeezed it into a refractometer. The more blood protein, the longer you can store the lobster, she said. Clearwater's harvests take place when blood protein is highest. "The U.S. fishes mostly in summer, when blood protein is lowest. Convenience is the reason. They're not doing it for lobster quality. They're doing it for their own convenience."

Lobsters in the Arichat Dryland Pound lose all inclination to molt. They are like orange juice at Tropicana, frozen in massive blocks so that Tropicana can cover the whole of the calendar year although the Florida harvest runs for only seven months. To make sure that there is no summer in the Dryland Pound, the ocean water descending through the apartments is maintained at thirty-four to forty-one degrees Fahrenheit, and in one way or another, in and out of brine, Clearwater keeps its lobsters about that cold until a UPS package car drops them at somebody's door.

Long-distance travel will stress a lobster and affect it physically. Among other things, it loses weight and accumulates ammonia. This can happen on a smooth highway, let alone in giddy turbulence at thirty thousand feet. If a lobster succumbs, the ammonia will detonate as a shaped olfactory charge. The next time your quarterback is sacked unconscious, put a dead lobster under his nose and he'll stand up ready for action. If lobsters are going to travel the globe, they need rest at strategic places en route—they need to "float," in the language of the trade, for recuperative periods. Accordingly, when Clearwater became aware that UPS was building a new air superhub in Louisville, Clearwater decided to go there, establish a rest-and-rehabilitation reservoir close to the airport, and cause Louisville to become the flying-lobster capital of the United States.

Every five or six days, an eighteen-wheel reefer with a red cab and a silver-white box loads up at Arichat, pulls away dripping, carefully circumscribes Isle Madame on roads scarcely wider than it is, passes white lobster boats in arms of the sea framed in black spruce over massive shelves of bedrock, and picks up speed for Kentucky. It goes through St. John, and on down New Brunswick 1 to Calais, Maine, where United States Customs X-rays the truck's entire box, which can be carrying as many as thirty thousand lobsters. Dropping six gears, the truck climbs Day Hill on Maine 9, locally known as "the Airline," crossing the ridges of Washington County. The Day Hill gradient in winter weather sometimes causes tractor-trailers to slide backward while their powered wheels go on spinning forward. At Bangor, the lobsters connect with I-95 and follow it down into New Hampshire and on nearly to Boston, swinging southwest on I-495 and—to save ten minutes—taking I-290 through Worcester. Steve Price is one of the drivers. Dennis Oickle is often paired with him. Steve says they "eat on the fly." He brings food from home, keeps it in the truck's mini-fridge, and heats it in the microwave. Steve—brush-cut hair, trim avuncular beard—is the father of three. He says that Dennis, "being young, eats junk." Stops are so few that Dennis, for the most part, has to bring the junk with him. They both live in Sackville, Nova Scotia. At work, they don't see a lot of each other. While one drives, the other sleeps—four hours on, four off. In April, 2004, they set the Clearwater record for the run—Arichat to Louisville in twenty-seven and a half hours. Most trips take at least twenty-nine hours, some as many as thirty-two. They cross the Hudson at Newburgh, the Delaware at Port Jervis, the Susquehanna on I-80 at Mifflinville, Pennsylvania. At a Bestway truck stop not far from State College, they spend six hundred dollars and upward for fuel, but they wait to take a shower on the deadhead leg home. Over and under their crates of lobsters in the box are layers of corn ice as much as a foot thick. On the interstates, the dripping water leaves a trail behind the truck. Since the sole decoration on the box is the company's simple blue-and-red logo—"CLEARWATER"—other drivers will now and again call on the CB radio and, typically, tell them, "Hey, you're losing your load." On the interstates of Ohio, the lobsters have to slow down to a crawl—fifty-five m.p.h., a strict state law—to Akron, to Columbus, to Cincinnati, with ammonia levels rising. The truck has a global positioning system. Ross Wheeler, Clearwater's truck manager in Halifax, tracks the journey on his computer, as do Mike Middleton, Tim Wulkopf, David Brockman, and Dave Joy, in Louisville. From time to time, they all e-mail the truck. Clearwater is a collection of mainly young and exuberant people, so informal that their worldwide directory is alphabetized by first names. There are two hundred people in the Lobster Division.

The truck comes into Louisville on I-264, gets off near the airport at the Poplar Level exit, goes south about a mile, and turns onto Produce Road—8:05 P.M. this time, a spring evening, twenty-nine hours and forty minutes from Arichat. Dennis is asleep, unable to defend himself about the junk food. A forklift takes two hours to unload some ten thousand pounds of lobsters—a light load, variously in crates and in Dryland system trays. A "truck map"—the sort of cargo chart that would be familiar to the first mate of a merchant ship—helps blend the arrivals into the reservoir, where strings of crates are suspended on ropes, and more than fifty thousand pounds of lobsters can chill out at two degrees Celsius in brine made with Kentucky branch water and sea salt in bags from Baltimore. The new arrivals soon appear on the "reservoir map," from which orders in the sixteen different grades can be filled. Housed in one unit of a commercial tilt-up, the reservoir is four feet deep and close to ninety feet long. Arriving crates are randomly opened and inspected before they are immersed. En route, the lobsters have lost about three per cent of their weight. Looking for "weaks, deads, and rots," Dave Joy is not for the moment finding any. He peers down into the bottom of the crates for signs of bleeding, which takes experience, since lobster blood is clear. He examines shells for cracks. Gripping a thorax, he lifts up a lobster, wet and shining. It splays its claws like a baby bear. Now he takes hold of each claw and lifts the lobster by the arms like a human child. Its tail forms the letter C. The odds on this creature ending its travels in a Palm restaurant are extremely high. It is full of life and weighs five pounds. Long before midnight, the truck departs for Canada, loaded with empty crates. In bed in the back of the tractor, Dennis has slept through the whole of the stop in Louisville.



Clearwater's over-all mortality rate was once as high as twelve per cent but is now under five per cent, despite the fact that lobsters characteristically lose their energy fast. To demonstrate, Mike Middleton, Clearwater Louisville's chief of operations, holds one up horizontally. Its tail extends stiffly. Its claws spread out. It seems ready to fly. Within ten seconds, though, the tail has gone down like a bad dog's. If you pick up a lobster and the tail droops from the get-go, the lobster is probably verging on death. Lobsters that are weak and dying are sold to Asian buffets. Dead lobsters are probed with an electrode. If the tails curl up, the lobsters are frozen instantly and sold for stock and bisque. If the tails do not curl up, the carcasses are catfish bait. Middleton says he grows "huge pumpkins" over moldering lobsters. He also takes home an occasional robust giant. After parboiling it, he splits it longitudinally from head to tail and completes the cooking on his outdoor grill.

Middleton, Wulkopf, and Brockman have learned their lobsters in Kentucky. Dave Joy, on the other hand, grew up on St. George's Bay, between Port aux Basques and Corner Brook, in Newfoundland. With Clearwater almost from its inception, in 1976, he bought Newfoundland lobsters for the company for a decade before moving to its headquarters in Nova Scotia. Later, he took two years off to get a degree from Fisher Tech, in Corner Brook. When UPS drew the lobsters to Kentucky, he was drawn, too, and intends never to leave. He is the plant manager, in charge of the rez, as everyone calls it, and supervisor of the packing. Short and compact, in a blue T-shirt and blue warmup pants with white stripes, he picks up a big lobster that is stopping over on its way to Los Angeles. Does the tail come up? How fast does it come up? "It's a quick decision by the packer," Dave says. "He's only got a few seconds to make up his mind." Claws akimbo, tail flat—sold! With subzero gel packs, the lobsters go into standard thirty-pound Styrofoam boxes logoed "CLEARWATER," "HARDSHELL FRESH," "VIVANT." Thirteen selects are about all that will fit into one of these boxes—thirteen "pieces," as whole lobsters are called. If the customer wants chix, the box will hold twenty-seven or twenty-eight pieces. Even if they are well chilled by the gel packs, lobsters can be out of water no more than forty-eight hours before mortality steeply rises. Afternoons and evenings, the clock starts ticking as they go into the Styrofoam boxes. At 10 P.M., a brown UPS "moose," a step van somewhat larger than the standard package car, backs up to the Clearwater dock. The driver is wearing brown shoes, brown socks, brown shorts, a brown polo shirt, and a brown headband—Susan Badger. On a typical Monday or Thursday evening, UPS will pick up about three thousand pounds of lobsters, but this is a Wednesday and the net load is somewhat shy of six hundred. Badger starts off for the UPS air hub, five minutes away.

She is carrying about two hundred and seventy lobsters ticketed for a spray of destinations, including the Cranberry Tree Restaurant, in Skagit County, Washington, sixty miles north of Seattle; Bosackis Boat House, on a lake in northern Wisconsin; the Ho-Chunk Casino, in Baraboo, Wisconsin; the Rainbow Casino, in Nekoosa, Wisconsin; Elden's Food Fair, in Alexandria, Minnesota; Jane's Tavern, on the Middle Loup River, in Rockville, Nebraska; a Keg restaurant in Chandler, Arizona; the Useppa Inn & Dock Company, in Bokeelia, Florida; the Ione Hotel, in the Sierran foothills of California; a private home in Put-in-Bay, Ohio, on an island in Lake Erie less than ten miles from Canada; Estiatorio Milos, a Greek restaurant at 125 West Fifty-fifth Street, Manhattan; and Mountainside Lodge, near Old Forge, New York, in the Adirondacks.

Of course, none of those are from that truckload just in from Nova Scotia. The new arrivals are beginning their required rest, but, in Tim Wulkopf's words, "the turnover is two weeks tops and out of here." Most of that truckload is gone in a few days—for example, Next Day Air to Manhattan Beach, California, left at someone's front door at nine-twenty-six in the morning; to the Horseshoe Casino, in Robinsonville, Mississippi (fourteen hours out of the rez); to an e-customer in Pasadena, Texas; to Spinnaker's Restaurant, in St. Joseph, Michigan; to a Palm in Denver; to Ruth's Chris restaurants in Metairie and Lafayette, Louisiana; to the A&B Lobster House, in Key West. Wulkopf says, "Between e-commerce and wholesale, I can't think of a state we don't ship to. Montana, Maine, West Virginia, Missouri, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Georgia, Hawaii, Alaska. We have customers in Puerto Rico." Of Clearwater's air shipments, about seventy-five per cent go west. But Clearwater's Canadian lobsters are also flown back east from Kentucky to Connecticut and New Jersey. Online, people will order as many as fifty or sixty pieces, but mostly fewer than ten: two to New Castle, Delaware; two to Hackensack, New Jersey; two to Barre, Vermont. The lobsters go by moose to the UPS hub as living passengers e-ticketed on the eleventh-largest airline in the world, arriving at the UPS air terminal to be screened and scanned and sorted and to ride up escalators and on horizontal belts toward heavy aircraft nosed up to gates.

UPS once leased old gas stations, furnished them with sawhorses under four-by-eight plywood sheets, and used the old gas stations as centers for sorting packages. Now they have the Worldport, as they call it—a sorting facility that requires four million square feet of floor space and is under one roof. Its location is more than near the Louisville International Airport; it is between the airport's parallel runways on five hundred and fifty acres that are owned not by the county, state, or city but by UPS. The hub is half a mile south of the passenger terminal, which it dwarfs. If you were to walk all the way around the hub's exterior, along the white walls, you would hike five miles. You would walk under the noses of 727s, 747s, 757s, 767s, DC-8s, MD-11s, A-300s—the fleet of heavies that UPS refers to as "browntails." Basically, the hub is a large rectangle with three long concourses slanting out from one side to dock airplanes. The walls are white because there is no practical way to air-condition so much cavernous space. The hub sorts about a million packages a day, for the most part between 11 P.M. and 4 A.M. Your living lobster, checked in, goes off on a wild uphill and downhill looping circuitous ride and in eight or ten minutes comes out at the right plane. It has travelled at least two miles inside the hub. The building is about seventy-five feet high, and essentially windowless. Its vast interior spaces are supported by forests of columns. It could bring to mind, among other things, the seemingly endless interior colonnades of the Great Mosque of Córdoba, but the Great Mosque of UPS is fifteen times the size of the Great Mosque of Córdoba.

Most packages enter the hub and

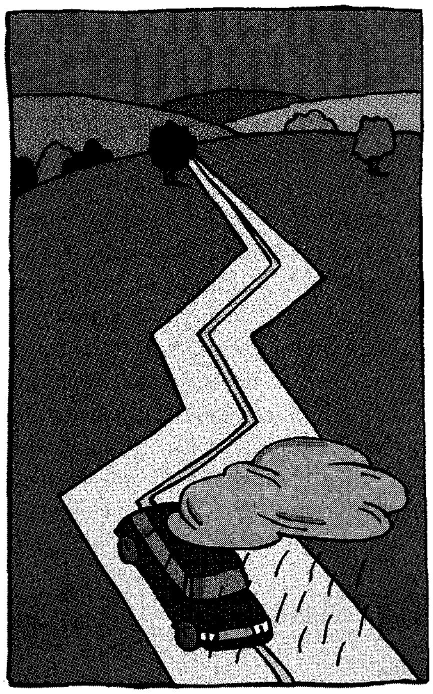
COLD FRONT

When I was a young woman in Iowa, one quality I considered indispensable in a prospective mate was the willingness to drive to a coast. Over the years, there were trips to every conceivable coast, including Puget Sound, Niagara Falls, and Santa Barbara. Thus it was that, in January, 1984, when my daughters were five and a half years and fourteen months, it did not occur to me to worry about our journey by car all the way from Ames, Iowa, to the southern tip of Florida and then back up the coast to Sag Harbor. We just told several friends we were heading their way, threw some things into the back of the Chevy Cavalier wagon, and strapped the girls into their seats. We didn't look at the weather report. Perhaps, therefore, we should not have been surprised when we were overtaken by sleet and snow an hour later and forced to stop far too soon at a Holiday Inn only a hundred miles or so from our house (twenty-nine hundred miles to go). When we got up in the morning and went out to the parking lot, the sun was suspiciously bright, but to us it seemed that Florida was just over the horizon.

There was snow all the way to Nashville, where we stayed with my uncle. In gratitude for his hospitality, my husband shovelled my uncle's two-hundred-and-twenty-foot driveway. The neighbors came out to watch, and we soon discovered why—Nashvillians didn't mind being snowed in, and, anyway, as soon as the sun came out in the morning the snow began to melt. But we were Iowans, and Florida was just over the horizon.

Crossing into northern Alabama, we admired the ice-covered trees, the graceful sweep of the highway through the hills, and the bright grass by the roadside that seemed to be strewn with shattered glass. We were alone on the highway with our snow tires. Not even road crews had come out with sand. We didn't intend to be reckless—it simply never occurred to us to stop. At the end of a very long day, we reached Montgomery, where we pulled off into the parking lot of the first motel we saw.

Once we got some food, and unpacked a few things from the car, and visited with some friends who lived there, it was midnight. At this point, the fourteen-month-old decided that she was going to learn to walk. She staggered back and forth from one end of our motel room to the other for two hours, before falling over in her sleeper. Right about then, I noticed that the doors of the motel rooms kept slamming, and that lots of big semis were idling in the parking lot. We were up by six.



SEYMOUR CHWAST

We smiled and made pleasant conjugal conversation. His job was to drive, and mine was to keep the peace. In the Florida Panhandle, we finally relaxed—no more snow. That was probably why the children started to fuss. It was also probably why he said, "Can't you do something to shut them up?," and why I took a bag of small wrapped soft candies out of the glove compartment and tossed them over the back of the seat to shouts of joyful disbelief. When I looked around, I saw it was the best game ever—unwrapping each piece and having the bliss of abundance melt in their mouths. I knew this stopgap offended him, though, so that's probably why I said, "So, if something happened to both of us, who would they go to?"

He said, "My sister, of course."

And I said, "Oh, not her. My—"

I don't clearly remember that argument, except that it went on for five days and had many branches—down the sunny west coast of Florida (Me: "She's twenty-two!" Him: "Her B.A. is in education!"), in low voices at my mother's house (Him: "There's something more going on here!" Me: "Why would you think that?"), through tight lips at his sister's apartment in Boca Raton (Me: "They would never get to see my family!" Him: fraught silence), through a blinding rainstorm up the South Carolina coast (Me: "Yeah, right!" Him: "Say what you really think, I want to hear it"), and all through Washington, D.C., where we were supposed to stop for dinner with friends. We were getting along so badly by then that when he missed the exit I didn't dare say anything. When I called my friend from a hotel in Trenton to apologize, she informed me that only two days before she had fallen down the stairs and broken her arm, but she had cooked dinner anyway. I apologized again. I didn't try to explain; she didn't have any kids. But years later, when she had two boys of her own, she said to me, "I was angry then, but I understand now. You were on a family vacation."

—*Jane Smiley*

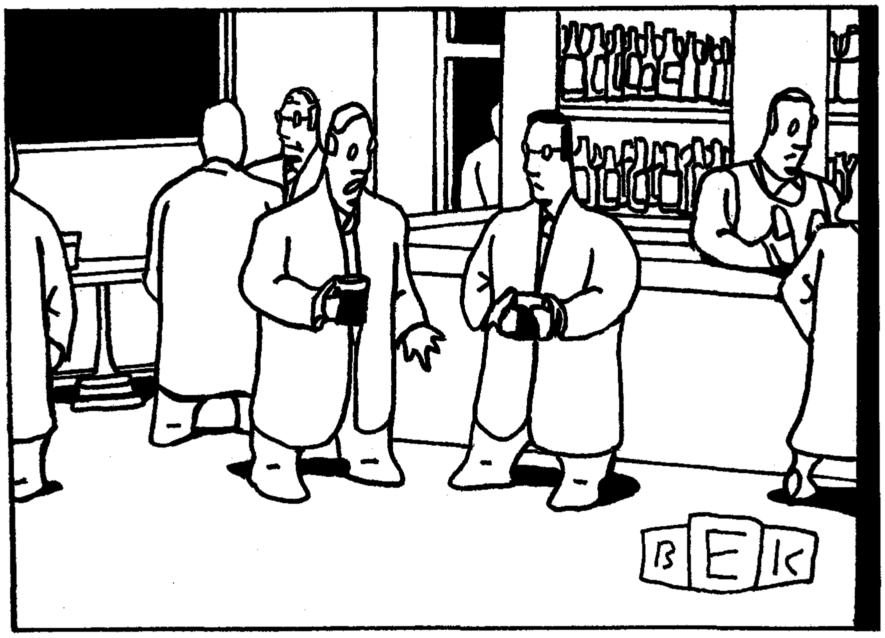
leave the hub in "cans"—aluminum containers in quarter-moon and half-moon shapes that fit the cylindroid interiors of the aircraft. The cans look something like domal tents, and in size could serve as back-yard gazebos. A can can hold well over a ton of lobsters, the bulk of the Styrofoam boxes notwithstanding. If a can loaded with ordinary packages weighs as much as two tons, one UPS worker can easily move it. The concourse floors are variously embedded with ball bearings and inverted caster wheels, causing a can to move lightly and a pedestrian to proceed at risk.

If no problem develops along the way, a standard six-sided package going through the hub will be touched twice by human beings: as it is unloaded on entry and as it is loaded into a can after its trip through what the UPS workers universally call "the sort." Some five thousand workers come nightly to the sort, but few of them ever touch a package, which is largely what the hub is about, as it carries automation off the scale of comprehension. After a package comes out of a can and is about to zing around in belts and chutes and into on-ramps and down straightaways as fast as an athlete can run, the first of the two handlers—package under eyeball—applies the live human factor, making a couple of crucial but not irreversible decisions: the package is to be placed on the correct choice among three adjacent belts, and the package is to go off on its ride label side up. Sortation used to require a more complex application of human thought, but in the development of the UPS air hub the intellectual role of the workers "out in the sort" underwent a process of "de-skilling." "When they made the hub, they de-skilled a lot of positions," a UPS manager explained to me. "Label side up. That's pretty much the extent of the training for these folks."

Those three initial conveyors are for six-sided packages, for "irregs" (parcels of irregular dimension, like automotive exhaust pipes), and for "smalls" (anything really modest in size but mainly the overnight and two-day-air envelopes with which UPS and the United States Postal Service try to nip the heels of FedEx). Triaged, the packets and packages ride up the concourse and into the core—the rectangular space with a footprint of twenty-eight acres where a package picks up speed as it moves from one to another set of east-west and north-south loops and is pushed, shoved, stopped, started, carried, routed, rerouted, diverted, guided, and conducted to belts that lead to belts that relate not only to the region, state, county, community, and neighborhood it is going to but also, in some crowded cities, to the street and block. A hundred and twenty-two miles of belts and monorails accomplish this in what is actually a more orderly manner than the rolled chicken wire that—as you gaze up into it—its compression suggests. You see packages in every direction moving on a dozen levels and two principal floors, which are perforated by spaces that allow the belts to climb to all levels and descend ultimately to the level of the airplanes. Over all, this labyrinth, which outthinks the people who employ it, is something like the interior of the computers that run it. Like printed circuitry, seven great loops, each a thousand feet around, are superposed at right angles above other loops. A fly fisherman would admire the proportions of these loops, which are like perfect casts, the two sides close and parallel, the turns at the ends tight. Unending sequences of letters and small packages zip around these loops, while the larger packages follow one another on the belts, each package tailgating the one in front of it but electronically forbidden to touch it. When a collision seems imminent where belts converge, the guilty package stops dead in its tracks and awaits its turn to move on. Collectively, the loops are like the circuits in the motherboards among the interface cards of a central processing unit wherein whole packages seeking specific airplanes are ones and zeroes moving through the chips.

Somewhere around each primary loop is one of three hundred and sixty-four positions where a given parcel will suddenly depart for another loop where there are three hundred and sixty-four additional positions at one of which the package will continue its quest to school up with like-minded packages. The first set of loops runs east and west, the second set north and south, and so on. It doesn't take a black-hole mathematician to see that the range of choice is not as wide as the universe but is getting there. If for some reason an exit position is not ready to accommodate an arriving small package, the package remains on the loop to make another circuit and another try. Under the most complex of circumstances, a package could travel several miles inside the hub before it boards a plane.

The core of the hub is not an infinite indoor space, of course. It is only a scant half-mile long, but it seems infinite because if you are in the vastness of the sort you can see only a short distance in any direction, including up. I was never left alone there, but if you were left alone



"I woke up in a strange marriage with my clothing off."

there you would need a compass no less than you would if you were dropped into the forests of Gabon between Makokou and Mékambo. You make your way forward through the dense stands of columns—columns three inches square supporting conveyors, columns sixteen inches square rising to the roof—and you look up through grids and grates and through more grids and grates laced roundabout with six-sided boxes in skeins like fast-moving scarabs. There is also a density of sound—blowers, conveyors, the hum of big cicadas—and you pass illuminated signs, not all of which you find illuminating: "Primary 1—West Induct, Area C"; "Sort Exception Area—1"; "Employee-Retention Committee"; "Tornado Shelter Area." The hub is still waiting for its first tornado. In two decades, the airport has been shut down only twice—by a foot and a half of snow in 1994 and on September 11, 2001. Some belts are color-coded—red belts for smalls, black belts for irregulars, orange belts for six-sided parcels—not that the color especially matters, since the packages know where they are going. The smalls, irregs, and six-sides each go into their own circuits. When a six-sided package reaches the position where it is meant to leave a belt, it is shoved off by chunks of thick black rubber known as "hockey pucks." The pucks at rest line the sides of belts and know in advance the length and weight of a package they are going to shove, so that a sufficient number of pucks slide out to do the shoving. Three hockey pucks slide out to shove a box of lobsters off a belt and down a chute.

UPS carries money in bags in the bellies of planes: Brink's money, Fort Knox gold, coins from casinos. Irregulars in the sort ride around in low-sided flatcars on monorails, roller-coastering from level to level. When an irreg in a cannister like a fire hydrant happened by, I asked what it was. Bull semen was the answer—on its way from Nebraska to Montana via Kentucky.

When the smalls come into the smalls loops, de-skilled workers place each envelope or small package label side up on a tray that is scarcely eighteen inches long. On the loop, the trays are lined up two abreast, and if you climb a couple of ladders to look down on them from an open-grated observation platform, you see the two rows of tilt trays, as they are called, swiftly circling the long carrousel loaded mainly with one-day or two-day letters. Completely surrounding the smalls loop at the bottom of a sloping apron of smooth wood are heavy canvas bags with open mouths. As a tray approaches the bag for which its letter is intended—a bag, say, that will be flying toward Oahu within the hour—the tray tilts to the outside, spilling the envelope onto the wooden slope. The weight of the envelope and speed of the loop and distance to the bag and friction on the wood all having been calculated as if by a Norden bombsight, the envelope slides forward and down, and drops into the bag, missing by a matter of inches the Tallahassee bag on one side and the Green Bay bag on the other. When a bag fills up, a worker closes and replaces it, and if an envelope comes along on its way to that bag it stays on the loop for another circuit. Dan McMackin, of UPS headquarters in Atlanta, once told me that people in the World Trade Center used to send UPS Next Day Air envelopes to people on other floors in the World Trade Center, because the packets would get there sooner than they would in the house mail. UPS is not so automated that it would send an overnight letter to Louisville and back to the sending Zip Code, let alone the same building. Next Day Air does not always require an airplane. A lot of Next Day Air parcels travel by tractor-trailer. UPS would send them by brown submarine if that was the better way to go.

Travis Spalding, whose office is elsewhere in Louisville, was the UPS supervisor who went everywhere with me and was the sesame of UPS security. For all that, he could lose his way in the jungles of the hub just about as readily as I could, and the two of us often had to ask directions. In a couple of million square feet of automation, a human voice giving directions is not easy to find, and we bushwhacked a good deal before coming upon someone like Jeff Savage, a manager of the small sort. After a crystal explanation that preprimaries decide which of three primaries are to follow them, preceding an advance to a Posisorter, which sets up the pucks and diverts packages to belts, he walked with us a considerable distance as if among the hedges of a maze and eventually came to a mezzanine edge where you could see far down and far up through a cavernous vista of the core of the hub. This was the Grand Canyon of UPS. On each of ten or fifteen levels, packages were moving in four compass directions at the rate of one mile in two and a half minutes on a representative sampling of the seventeen thousand high-speed conveyor belts. Pucks were pushing packages to the left, to the right, including lobsters that raced into cylindrical spaces and whirled in semicircles as if they were on an invertigo ride with an "aggressive thrill factor," in the language of amusement parks. In no other place could you absorb in one gaze the vast and laminated space where, in the language of UPS, "automated sortation takes place." Travis Spalding said, "The technology is not new, but nowhere else in the world is it used on this scale, including Memphis."

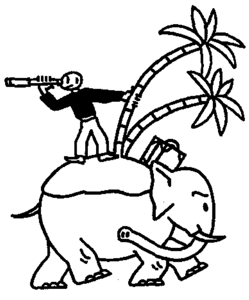
Over recent years, FedEx, of Memphis, has been chasing UPS in ground transportation of packages with about the same intensity that UPS has displayed in competing with FedEx in overnight deliveries. FedEx is the world's seventh-largest airline. As the rivalry ages, the one comes ever more to resemble the other, like *Time* and *Newsweek*, which often seem to have the same cover, and sometimes do. The root criterion impelling UPS and FedEx appears to be that a healthy business grows, expands, and must go on indefinitely expanding, or it dies. The economist Kenneth Boulding once said, "Anyone who believes that exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist." Nature's model for this paradox is *Homarus americanus*, the American lobster, which, almost indefinitely, expands and molts, expands and molts, growing an ever larger shell until it ends up on a bed of bamboo leaves in Japan.

If you own a Toshiba laptop and something jams, crashes, or even goes mildly awry, you call 1-800-TOSHIBA and describe your problem. If the answerer can't help you, a brown package car shows up at your door with an empty padded box hollowed out in the shape of your laptop. UPS takes your computer overnight to Louisville, and keeps it there. Two miles south of the runways are six more UPS buildings, white, and windowless in a spotless and silent landscaped campus, and covering, on average, more than three hundred thousand square feet. Your laptop goes in there—Building 6. Within a few hours—in a temperature-controlled, humidity-controlled, electrostatic-sensitive area—an electronic-repair technician who is a full-time UPS employee will have the innards of your Toshiba laptop spread all over a table. Computers, laid open, can be devastated by static electricity. There are eighty technicians. You visit them in gowns and slippers. They replace hard drives, main-system boards, liquid-crystal displays. In the process, they remove viruses as if they were whisking lint. In a day or two, your laptop takes a ride through the sort and flies in a browntail back to you.

UPS became interested in this kind of thing a few years ago when the company realized, as was explained to me, that it had "maxed out in the package-delivery trade and now needed to expand." Toshiba evidently could not care less whether customers know or do not know that UPS repairs its laptops. To UPS, Toshiba has also outsourced its buyer remorse. After new computers are returned to retail stores for credit—downloaded with who could guess what—the computers are gathered up by UPS and detailed in Louisville, flushed out and in every sense cleaned. With ninety-day warranties, the computers go back into the sales stream. In Building 6, NPR stands for New Product Return.

In Elizabethtown, Kentucky, half an hour down the interstate, is a seventh secluded warehouse—four hundred thousand square feet—where UPS shelves a variety of products including every last component of Bentley motor cars. Queen Elizabeth arrives at Balmoral in her Bentley. You can go to the Bronx in your Bentley for a hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, the current cost of a Continental GT. There are more Bentleys in the United States than in England. In Zionsville, Indiana, is a Bentley dealership whose Web site tells you that it has the largest inventory of Bentley parts in North America. People in places like New York and Montana will truck their Bentleys to Zionsville for repairs. When they do, Zionsville relies upon UPS in Elizabethtown for parts. The Bentley factory in England has called Elizabethtown for parts. Carl Norris, three years out of Western Kentucky University, is an operations supervisor there. Leading Travis Spalding and me through the client zones of the vast UPS depot, he walked into a fifteen-thousand-square-foot space where bins and racking systems held everything from nuts, bolts, and gaskets to entire engines ready to fit into cars like bread into toasters. "This is the Bentley account," he said. "These engines are rated at two hundred miles per hour. They'll bust two hundred." Norris introduced us to Michael Mountain, locally known as Mr. Bentley, a well-built African-American who looked as if he also could bust two hundred. Michael Mountain took us through windscreens, wheels, and exhausts—irregs wrapped and ready for the hub—and on to transmissions, which were packed in wooden chests that would not have seemed unusual to Long John Silver. If your Bentley breaks down in the Steptoe Valley of Nevada, you may be there for the night but a brown vehicle will soon show up with parts. "The GT can have a refrigerator in the boot," Mountain told us. "And this is a pollen filter." Pollen filter? "Yes—so your allergies don't act up while James is driving you around town."

UPS calls this relatively new part of its business UPS Supply Chain Solutions. Bentley is among the oldest S.C.S. accounts. Another is Rolls-Royce, whose packaged V-22 Osprey engines were also sitting on the Elizabethtown floor. When a start-up shoe company was growing so rapidly that its trucks had nowhere to unload, UPS Supply Chain Solutions became the shoe company's principal warehouse. Not every client is as open about the relationship as are Bentley, Toshiba, and Rolls-Royce. Large areas of all seven warehouse floors are off limits to visitors, reserved for companies who would prefer that their products not turn brown en route. They have nondisclosure contracts. These include not a few of the household names in American commerce. They want you to think it all comes straight from them. Famous cameras from the Orient arrive in Louisville in bulk-shipment crates. UPS has the retail boxes waiting, and fills them with the famous cameras. UPS repairs certain printers. They refurbish certain cell phones.



One afternoon last year, I bought a printer through Amazon.com and, being me, clicked the box for free shipping—promised to be at your door within two weeks. The printer actually arrived before ten the next morning. I was puzzled speechless at the time but have since come to know that my e-commerce order caromed from Amazon to UPS, and quite soon the printer was rolling from a UPS warehouse to the hub. When I told this story to Howard Strauss, a digital savant who worked for NASA on the Apollo program and is now at Princeton University, Howard said, "In my business, people are always saying it's easier to move bits than atoms. Bits move at the speed of light. Atoms move at the speed of a 747, if you're lucky." My transaction travelled both ways, and a good deal faster by binary digit.

The Elizabethtown warehouse owes its existence to the dot-com orogeny, when UPS Air swelled into the e-commerce trade. When the bubble burst, some dot-com clients abruptly vanished—here today, gone forever—and UPS did not even know where to send the leftover goods. One that stayed solid was Jockey. In nine thousand boxes in six rows of bins—each row two hundred feet long and organized by something like the Dewey decimal system—UPS keeps Jockey panties and Jockey shorts and Jockey bras and Jockey shirts and Jockey nightgowns and Jockey socks in the warehouse in Elizabethtown. Jockey is in Kenosha, Wisconsin, but this is the nexus of Jockey.com, and when you order your next pair of briefs UPS will find them on a shelf in Kentucky, wrap them, and send them through the sort. Carl Norris said, "A company that is concentrating on marketing and sales doesn't have a lot of time to worry about distribution problems. That's where we come in. We become a partner with the companies. We run these businesses like they're our own."

We moved out of Jockey space and into thirty-seven thousand square feet of veterinary cat and dog food, fuel for the Royal Canin company's "Innovative Veterinary Diets"—to be found only at clinics and never at Wal-Mart. If your cat has a sensitive stomach, use Hi Factor Formula, said instructions on the palleted bags and cans. Eating Royal Canin, your pet will, on average, live a little longer, but you have to buy the product throughout the life of the dog. Or cat. There was venison-and-potato dog food, vegetarian dog food, potato-and-whitefish dog food, and green-peas-and-rabbit formula for the "nutritional management of gastrointestinal disorders" in cats. There were foods for feline urinary syndromes, foods for feline inflammatory bowels. Lending credence to Royal Canin, its allotted space at UPS smelled like a vet's office.

While Jockey came to the hub from Wisconsin and Clearwater from Nova Scotia, Hillerich & Bradsby was already there. By the front door of 800 West Main Street in Louisville, close to the Ohio River, is a baseball bat that weighs sixty-eight thousand pounds. This is Hillerich & Bradsby's company sign—the ne plus ultra Louisville Slugger—and for Hillerich & Bradsby UPS Air is the premier supply-chain solution. Suppose Derek Jeter runs low on bats and sends an anxious message to Louisville. At 800 West Main, a big ash dowel goes into a machine that was made in Italy and is programmed for Jeter's personal slugger—a thirty-two-ounce, thirty-four-inch P72 with a regular knob, a twenty-nine-thirty-seconds-inch handle, and a two-and-eleven-thirty-seconds-inch barrel. In sixty seconds, starting at one end, a bat emerges from the dowel. It is dipped in lacquer for a Smith finish, which is black. A Smith finish is also sateen, like dancing pumps. Eleven more dowels go through the same procedure, and then a six-sided package is off to the sort and into a plane that is aimed at the New York Yankees, wherever they might be. On the Friday when Fred McGriff, chilling out in Durham, was called up by Tampa Bay, he needed new bats he had ordered, and a package of twelve was sent UPS overnight and delivered in Florida in time for Saturday's game.

"*It's a great country—just don't get sick.*"

• •

About two-thirds of major-league players use Louisville Sluggers. When they need bats badly, they call Charlotte Jones, of the Pro Bat Department. Other employees travel around among the teams while Jones spends her days taking orders on the phone. Ken Griffey, Jr., calls her Mom, as do a great many major-league players. She routinely asks them if there are adjustments they would like to make in their existing profiles. Would you like to try a flared knob this time? Would you like your bats cupped? A cupped bat has been scooped out at the fat end to lighten the swing. Usually, a player's interest in adjustments is in inverse ratio to his batting average. In considering new dimensions and characteristics, he has more than six thousand choices. The ballplayers call Mom up from everywhere and they don't always get through. "Bret Boone," she says, "if he's not getting the pop out of his bats, he's likely to pick up his phone at all hours of the night." Her published number is 1-888-444-2287, and her home telephone is unlisted. Players say to her, "I want that special number." They don't get it. Mom is actually a grandmother. Her phone is upstairs and she sleeps downstairs. She likes to quote Yogi Berra, who said, "There can't be anything wrong with me—it has to be the bat." If players pay for their own bats (ash, forty-two dollars; maple, fifty-five), they can sell broken ones to fans and get a fourfold return on their investment. If the ball club pays for the bats, the ball club sells the broken bats. After a century and a quarter, there is something left in baseball of the grubbing, gloveless era. When Ken Griffey, Jr., was nearing his five-hundredth home run, he called Jones often to buy more bats. Jones describes Griffey as "one of the best salesmen for Louisville Slugger," and says that in his profile preferences he is unusually consistent, faithful to his Jose Cardenal model C271C with a double dip of lacquer. The second dip makes the wood harder. Griffey, she says, quoting him, is not easy to reach, either, accepting phone calls in the clubhouse only from his wife, his parents, and "that woman from Louisville Slugger." At Hillerich & Bradsby, a unit is a six-sided package of two, four, six, or twelve bats. A major-league player goes through a hundred bats a year, and two hundred

ARE WE THERE YET?

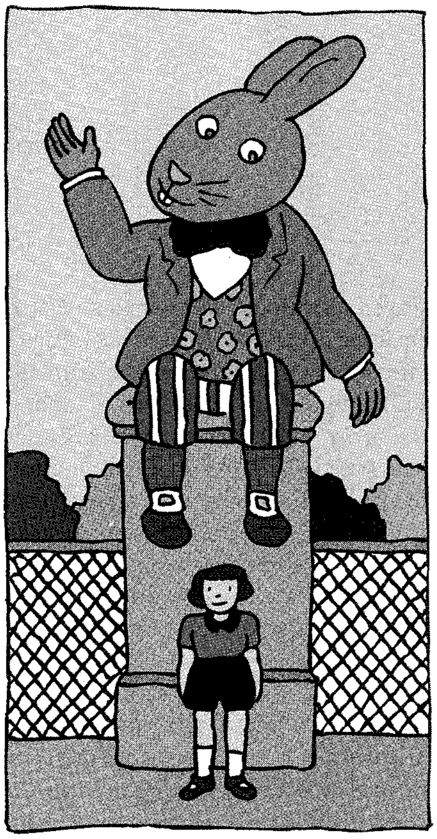
PILGRIMAGE

My parents got the idea for our only vacation from a priest. Their marriage was based on shared devout Catholicism; our days were shaped and colored by it. They were middle-aged when I was born, my mother forty-one, my father fifty-five. My mother had polio, but she supported us by working as a legal secretary because my father didn't have a job.

In the spring of 1954, when I was five years old, a priest suggested that we make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré, in Quebec, where prayers were said to be very powerful, particularly if the petitioner made his request while climbing up the stone steps to the basilica on his knees. We would also visit a nearby shrine dedicated to the Virgin: Cap de la Madeleine. We would pray for my father to get "a good job." We knew that the jobs he got, and lost—bartender, taxi-driver—were beneath him. We knew that "a good job" would involve words. He was a writer. An editor.

As a treat for me, when we had finished visiting the shrines, we would stop at Storytown, a recently constructed poor man's Disneyland that was north of Albany. I don't know how my parents learned of it; it was not the sort of thing they usually knew about. It was as if they'd suddenly become interested in space travel.

To save money on hotels, we would make the trip from New York to Quebec in one long twelve-hour drive. We would eat all our meals in the car. My mother packed ham sandwiches, Ritz crackers, a special juice for me whose name I loved: apricot nectar. I was happy in the large back seat. I could see my parents' heads, turning pleasantly toward each other; she would pass him a bite to eat, a sip of something. I pretended that the back seat was my hotel and that the window crank was a phone, and I ordered room service: champagne and caviar. We crossed the border into Canada and I was disappointed that people weren't speaking French. I loved the sound of French words, and I especially liked the name Cap de la Madeleine, which sounded to me like a dancer tapping down a flight of stairs. And I was disappointed that we were staying not in a hotel but in a motel, with wallpaper that was meant to look like knotty pine.



SEYMOUR CHWAST

In the morning, when we got to the basilica, my mother and I stayed in the lower chapel, praying as my father made his way up the stairs on his knees. I said my prayers in a French accent, pretending that I was praying in French. My mother held her silver rosaries. When my father came down to get us, he looked refreshed, young, triumphant. Back at the motel, my mother bathed his raw and bloody knees with iodine, then bandaged them. I was proud, but confused; I thought my father brave in his wounds, but my mother's unaccustomed tenderness seemed strange, as did my father's lofty, calm acceptance of her ministrations.

I slept until we got to Storytown. Now I realize it wasn't much, just some painted cement monuments to various fairy tales and nursery rhymes: the Old Woman's Shoe, Cinderella's Pumpkin, the Mad Hatter, the March Hare. It was newly opened; there were piles of red dirt alongside the cement paths pristine in their recent dryness. Most children in America were in school that day. Was that the reason we were the only ones there? Or was it that people hadn't heard of Storytown yet, or didn't think it worth a visit? In any case, we had it to ourselves, and the emptiness felt sacred. I believed that the place had been created entirely for me, that my parents had thought this place up, then actualized it only to delight me. The figures were much larger than I. Slowly, reverently, I went from spot to spot, climbing up on them, sitting down, having my picture taken. It wasn't as if I thought I was part of the stories—rather, I was honoring them, honoring their place in my life as my parents had honored St. Anne and the Virgin. But I had nothing to ask for in this place, no favors needing to be granted, because I was entirely happy. I felt that my parents and I were admirable, enviable: my father with his bandaged knees, my mother serving apricot nectar, me on Miss Muffet's Tuffet, smiling as they told me to say "Cheese."

I believed it was a sure thing that my father would get a job. Then everyone would realize our superiority. But he did not; he died a year and a half later. And after that, for a very long time I didn't go anywhere at all.

—*Mary Gordon*

units a day go in brown package cars from West Main Street to the hub. On UPS invoices Hillerich & Bradsby in Louisville spends as much as thirty thousand dollars a week.

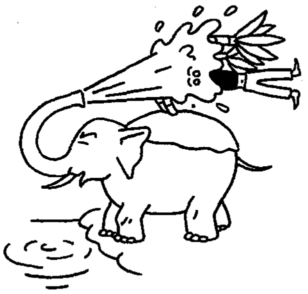
If you walk from New Jersey to California, you can replace your socks by Next Day Air, as at least one man has already done. Aged sixty-nine when he started, he wore bar-coded T-shirts. On his arrival at each successive city, UPS scanned him, ready to call 911. His itinerary grew in the computerized tracking system, which starts ordinarily with a UPS driver's DIAD (die-add), the cumbersome "delivery information acquisition device" that looks like a safe-deposit box in the driver's hand and not only records pickups and deliveries but also initiates tracking labels. On the walker's seventieth birthday, he was still walking. UPS delivered the cake.

A package going through Louisville is scanned as many as six times in the hub alone. When you see a bright-red beam crossing a box, that was an infrared image sensor. The label is read, the weight and the dimensions are registered. The label is digitally photographed. If something is wrong, as is not infrequently the case, the system calls the package an "exception." Labels may be illegibly handwritten. Reused boxes may have two or more labels. Footlocker boxes are reused so much that somebody's homemade cookies may want to go to three cities. A Zip Code may have a slipped digit or may simply not be there.

In the Telecode Office, a large room at the edge of the core, rows of telecoders bend toward computer monitors and study bad labels in digital imagery. Telecoders have twenty to thirty seconds to rectify the labels in an electronic way, which, usually, they are able to do, tapping at their keyboards. If they fail, nothing jams the loops, because the offending packages are swept away to exceptions. Down in a "sort exception area," a new label comes out of a machine and is stuck on the package by another human hand.

A large percentage of the people at the computers appear to be college students, and that is what they are. While automation has de-skilled the sort from the human point of view, shrinking the population around the belts, it is at the same time burning the midnight oil of college students in order to overcome its blemishes. Automation alone will not do everything for eight million packages a week, and UPS is so needful of reliable part-time employees that it has embraced the field of education as if it were a private university. It recruits students. It pays tuitions. It gives medical benefits and assistance with housing. It pays for books. It gives bonuses for passed courses. It adds fourteen hundred dollars to a baccalaureate degree. UPS is both the founder and the endowment of Metropolitan College, which has classrooms at the hub and also outsources its students to the University of Louisville, Jefferson Community College, and Jefferson Technical College. One semester at a time, the college signs contracts with the students, committing them to attend classes by day and work in the small hours for the UPS Next Day Air Operation. Whether this is an academic bonanza or indentured servitude is in the eye of the scholar.

More students go to Metropolitan College than to Haverford. I met many of them at the hub and talked at length with three. Jamie Kjelsen (silent "j"), one of the telecoders, was a striking young woman with long dark hair, bright brown eyes, and mother-of-pearl polish on her nails. She had been a high-school senior in Brandenburg, Kentucky, five years before, when some "Metro reps" came to the school and set up a table. During a lunch break, she signed a card, expressing an interest in Metro that reflected concern for her family ("My parents are middle class and would have a hard time paying for my school"). She had started with UPS as a diverter clerk on a conveyor in the old hub, and when the new hub was finished, in the fall of 2002, she went into the Telecode Office ("That's where we sort unsmart packages"). Her nightly routine, she said, was to telecode from eleven-something until about three-thirty, then ride fifteen minutes on a UPS shuttle to her car, then drive home. Asleep by five-thirty, she would get up around noon if she had a class at one. When did she study? "After work, after class, during fifteen-minute breaks at work, and riding in the shuttle. If there's a twenty-six-page report due or an important test coming, I might take the day off." To make ends meet and do so on her own without help from her parents, she had a second job—Fridays and Saturdays at Champs Sports in the mall. Taking the second job had forced her to reduce her number of courses and thereby lengthen her education ("If you go part time, it takes twice as long to graduate"). After five years in college, she was a junior. Aiming toward a bachelor-of-science degree in sociology from the University of Louisville, she would finish possibly in three more years—"when I'm twenty-six," she said, in a tone that faded with resignation. Could I have her e-mail address? "Sure—oceanrollie@hotmail.com."

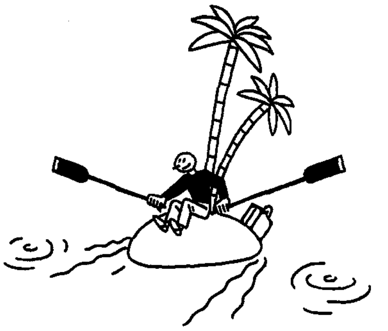


Amos Hammock was working in the shift, an air-operations term that refers not to hours but to the job of shifting cans. Big, beefy, brush-cut and tackle-shaped, he was among those who, with one hand, could haul a two-ton can over the casters and ball bearings to a waiting airplane, making sure that the can stopped rolling beside the correct airplane. After a year on an outbound belt, he had risen to the shift, and was now managing the efforts of nineteen others. Around his neck was a blue-and-white woven lanyard that said "PIKEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL 2001." Pikeville, on the Appalachian Plateau, is in eastern Kentucky, nearly two hundred miles from Louisville. Amos heard about Metro College on a radio commercial. He went to Hazard, Kentucky, to meet a Metropolitan College recruiter. He signed for "a hire-on bonus" of twenty-four hundred dollars, and a hundred dollars a month against rent—in addition, of course, to wages (eight dollars and fifty cents an hour). "You get paid," he said to me. "And they pay for your school. People would be about stupid not to take the chance." Now he was on the verge of an associate's degree in applied science from Jefferson Tech and, with diploma in hand, would be hoping for a job as an industrial mechanic.

Metropolitan College guides its students even while they are working in the dead of night. "College mentors are going around in the hub all the time," Amos told me, referring to college officers who are, all in one person, deans, course advisers, directors of studies, financial-aid representatives, counsellors, and confidants. At Oxford, they would be called moral tutors. They can also be fellow-students, like Betsy Curtis—an eighteen-year veteran of UPS who had left the sort to raise children but decided to return to it specifically "to take advantage of Metro College." Separated from her husband, she had gone back to the hub and back to college in 1999, when her third child was in a preschool program. And now she was a Metro College mentor in the small-sort area, arriving for work at 10 P.M., moving from one to another of the hundred and fifty students in her charge, occasionally getting hit by a package that missed a bag, and with firsthand understanding of a job that computerization had made "simpler but more tedious." She said, "The loan is the only thing that relates to staying time—four years for eight thousand dollars." One night a week, she would sit in a break area, backlit by the food and beverage machines, telling students about loan programs, retro reimbursements, and milestone bonuses (thirty hours, six hundred dollars). And she was very much one of them in the sense that in the daytime she was taking classes, too—on the University of Louisville's main campus, past Churchill Downs, a couple of miles toward the river from the hub. "By the end of the week, I'm so tired I can't hardly . . . I don't get very much sleep at all," she said. "But I want to finish without owing a ton of money. I leave the sort between two and two-thirty." Driving south toward home around three—tapping her cheeks, the "windows open for air"—she has nodded momentarily at the wheel.

Only twenty minutes from the hub, Betsy lives in rural, rolling country, where the crops are tobacco, sorghum, alfalfa, and churches. Asleep by three-thirty, she is up at six-forty-five to take her sons to school, and soon she is off to the university and her logic class. For exercise, she walks up to four miles a day on the university track, then goes home to do housework and yardwork and (often) cut grass. She has two pastures and two horses and forty acres with a lot of grass. She "gets along on five hours' sleep" because "there's always something to do with the house, yard, and children through the afternoon and evening before going to work," doing her best, all the while, "not to be grouchy." Friday into Saturday, she has stayed asleep nineteen hours "playing catch-up—sometimes it catches up with me." She sings in her church choir and appears in the Christmas pageant. She goes to her son's basketball games. When her daughter, Jasamine, class of 2003, was on the North Bullitt High School dance team, Betsy would take a pillow and sleep in her car outside the school, asking to be awakened for Jasamine's performance. Jasamine would come out and wake her up. Some of Jasamine's friends from those days now work in the small sort and have come to understand why Betsy was so often sleeping. Of all workers in the hub, many are single parents, seventy per cent are female, and the median age is thirty-four.

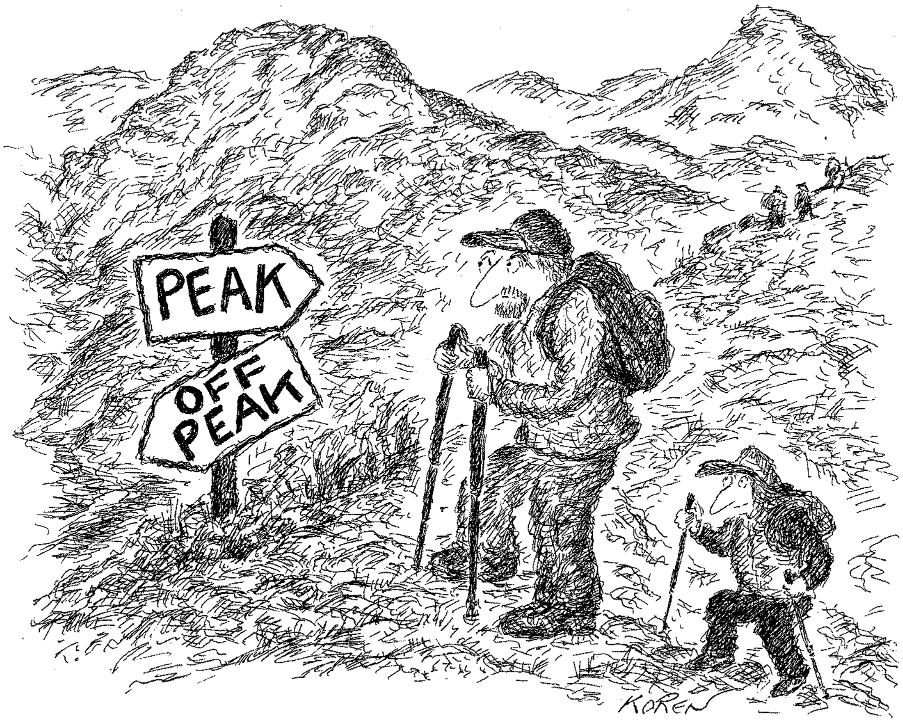
Of her husband, Betsy says, "He is going through second puberty." She is blond, with a smiling and trusting face and mother-of-pearl polish on her nails. When I met her, last spring, her sons were in the third and tenth grades, and Jasamine, a first-year student at the University of Louisville, had a twenty-month-old daughter named Hailey. Six months earlier, the baby's father had been hit hard by a drunk driver on Mud Lane near the Blue Lick Airport. Twenty-four years old, he was injured internally and underwent a hip replacement. After class, Betsy would stay with him until she went to work; then his mother would take over. With help from her own mother, Betsy also looked after the baby until spring. Now she had ten classes to go to gain her baccalaureate in marketing, and intended to follow that with a master's in secondary education. She hoped to teach high-school business classes in Bullitt County someday. So, to make it all possible, she said, "I'm out in the sort."



In a sequestered end of the core of the hub, an eight-foot chain-link fence, opaqued by blue plastic strips, surrounds an area reserved for United States Customs. If you get up close and peer through a break in the plastic, you see X-ray machines. You see packages with characters on them, packages with Spanish words on them. You see inspectors wearing badges and firearms. You do not see dogs but they can smell you. As packages stream through the sort, Customs can query out anything it wants to. Tracking the tracking, it studies the software with software.

On one of my first approaches to the hub, through a guarded peripheral gate, a package of Fruit Breezers in my pocket set off a screech from a metal-detecting wand. I had already been asked for my tape recorder, returnable on departure. A terrorist who decides to send himself somewhere by UPS Air might have difficulty getting off the ground, let alone through the hub. Among the many moats and screens set up by the company in recent years is this one: "Dear UPS Air Cargo Customer: Individual pieces that weigh 150 lbs. or more, and which are large enough to contain a human being must be tendered stretch or shrink-wrapped and/or banded to be considered ready for carriage." In other words, Harry Houdini could send himself Next Day Air. Others need not apply. A human irregular might make it through the sort, but only mummies qualify.

Not much gets near the browntails, so it was faintly giddy to be cleared one day in a car driven by Travis Spalding and to be far out by a taxiway as an A-300 landed. Brown and white, shaped like a very large guppy, it could have crammed in some three hundred passengers and instead was carrying ten thousand boxes arranged about as tightly. Slowly we followed it into a bay past the high brown fins of other planes, until it docked at B-09, smelling like a camp lantern. About a hundred UPS planes touch down in Louisville on an average evening. During the Christmas season, one lands every ninety seconds. Two of the



planes we went by had been previously owned. You could see the filled-in windows where passengers had once looked out. Most were bought new and seamless—especially the 757s, and 767s. Two pilots soon descended from the A-300 and got into a van that would take them to their lounge at the hub's Air Service Center. Their deplaning passengers may have been just boxes, but the pilots were dressed to a standard at least as crisp as Delta's or United's: filigreed gold on their brown hats, gold-striped brown epaulets on their white short-sleeved shirts, brown striped ties, brown trousers, shining brown shoes. UPS brown was borrowed long ago from the brown of Pullman railroad cars, and, with Pullman long gone, UPS has trademarked the color. When sculptures of racehorses appeared recently on sidewalks all over Louisville (a semi-permanent civic promotion), UPS erected a brown Pegasus outside the hub—a winged horse with a brown saddlecloth, ridden by a jockey in brown silks. UPS vernacular is all but trademarked as well. A package car is never a truck, because the company wishes to distance itself from the scruffy connotations of the term "truck driver," never mind that UPS drivers are all Teamsters. By corporate fiat, the very initials of the company's logo stand for nothing anymore. Officially, they carry no meaning, unless you happen to know that they once stood for United Parcel Service.

The pilots' lounge at two and three in the morning is a sea of brown-and-gold epaulets, vans idling outside, pilot bags piled high beside the curb where pilots go out to smoke. The talk at the tables is of "seven fours," "seven fives"—747s, 757s—and of approaching "pull times," when blocks are pulled away from wheels and airplanes depart. A faint whiff of hauteur is in the ready room—like the ambience of surgeons in a cafeteria. Essence of pilot is even stronger than essence of UPS—an impression, it should be said, that seems to derive almost wholly from the male pilots.

Worldwide, the airline has about twenty-five hundred pilots. Many come from the military. To be employed by UPS, they need as many hours as they would need to be employed by Delta or United. Not by chance, the percentage of UPS pilots who are women is higher than the industry average. I spoke with Stacey Bie one day as she was waiting for a van. She told me that she had been a military pilot ten years back, and then had started with UPS as a junior second officer. She was now a senior first officer, the rung below captain. An Ohioan educated at the University of Texas, she was aviator trim, and uncommonly attractive, with alert eyes and dark-brown hair. She said matter-of-factly that she would like to be a captain, yes, she would like to do it; after all, that was the goal everyone had at the start. Captain was where the seniority arrow pointed. On the other hand, a new captain among captains draws the less desirable routes and the less desirable hours. As she put it, "Junior captains work all night, and get the worst of nighttime flying." Also, being a captain would reduce her time with her husband and her two children, in Cincinnati. She said goodbye, and went off to fly her 757.

Beyond the pilots' quarters, the rest of the Air Service Center is also an all-night hive, its tight spaces as crowded as a newsroom, full of dispatchers, meteorologists, crew schedulers, crew reschedulers, flight dispatchers, and global trackers. There were contingency people studying storms and choosing alternative routes. Surrounded by a ring of contingency computers was a dull plastic cylinder that closely resembled a dome light from the roof of a police car. Action would erupt if it were to light up red. It lights up red when a UPS airplane anywhere in the world cannot take off for mechanical reasons or cannot function for any reason. After the light goes on, a standby crew gets into a standby airplane and flies off to fill the gap. Every night around the network, UPS has something like thirteen airplanes and thirty-two crewmen ready but unassigned. They sit and wait for trouble to arise, like pilots in the Swiss Air Force, whose planes are hidden inside Alps, always ready to emerge, in times of need, through camouflaged doors in the sides of the mountains. The UPS term for this is "hot spares." In Louisville or elsewhere, the light lights up, a siren goes off, and a loudspeaker says, "Activate the hot spare!" Hot-spare crews report to work each evening and go out to the ramp to pre-trip their plane. Then they wait. They arrive at seven and go home at three in the morning. If they are triggered by a call to "replace a mechanical" or "rescue that volume!," they have thirty minutes to get their plane off the ground. When the hot-spare light is red, mechanicals are the most common cause. In all its years of flying, UPS has never lost an airplane. ♦

FICTION

THE ORLOV-SOKOLOVS

BY LUDMILA ULITSKAYA

At first glance, they didn't make much of an impression. Both seemed rather small, they weren't particularly striking, and they were so taken with each other that they had no time for the rest of the world. A second glance, however, told you that they were kingpins, and after that it was impossible to recall the impression they had made at first. Nobody at the university could remember a time when they were not an item. They had met while taking the entrance exam, and even before the results went up, the two of them had hightailed it to his dacha. They returned five days later, on July 21st, the day the enrollment list was posted, and went straight to the dreaded bulletin board, which left all but three students trembling with fear. One of the three was Tonya Kolosova, an uninspired swot and, as they subsequently learned, the dean's niece. They—Andrey Orlov and Tanya Sokolova—were the other two.

Their surnames, derived from the Russian words for eagle and falcon, suited them perfectly. They were soon so inseparable that people started calling them the Orlov-Sokolovs.

During those five days at the dacha, where they had crawled out of bed only long enough to slip down to the village store for wine and other basics, they had learned that their differences could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Tanya liked classical music; Andrey liked jazz. He liked Mayakovski's poetry; she couldn't stand it. They laughed over their final difference: he had a sweet tooth; her favorite treat was a pickled gherkin.

On all other counts, they discovered total coincidence. Both were of mixed descent, Jewish on the mother's side. Both mothers were doctors. Granted, Tanya's mother was a single parent and had brought her up in fairly straitened circumstances, while Andrey's family had no worries along those lines. But even this was compensated for by the fact that, in place of Tanya's absent father, Andrey had a stepfather, a professor, with whom he didn't get along. The family's prosperity was accordingly an affront to his masculine pride. From the age of fifteen, he was out earning pocket money on Gorky Street, illegally dealing ladies' wristwatches and American jeans, which were just then beginning their triumphal progress from Brest Litovsk to Vladivostok.

At this point in Andrey's confession, Tanya chortled. "The conflict between labor and capital!" Her own business had been in an adjacent market sector. While Andrey was hawking jeans, she had been making button-down shirts, complete with the essential brand labels, having calculated that young people who aspired to wearing jeans would sooner or later face the dilemma of where to buy the shirt to go with them, which had to have not two but four buttonholes on the collar and a loop at the back.

How about sports? Oh, yes, they were both into sports. Andrey had been a boxer and Tanya a gymnast, but they had both declined the chance to turn professional. Andrey had achieved first category, become a candidate master of the sport, and joined the Moscow junior team as a flyweight before he quit. Tanya had dropped out slightly earlier, on the verge of making first category. She was satisfied with that.

On the fourth day of their life together, they confessed to each other that they had always preferred bigger partners, both of them being somewhat diminutive, especially compared with their fellow-athletes.

"Are you saying you don't fancy me?" Tanya snorted.

"Absolutely. I've always liked complete amazons."

"Well, you aren't my type, either. Too skinny." Tanya laughed. Listening to them, you might have imagined that they had both been through fire and water. In fact, although they did have some experience, it was very circumscribed, barely sketched. They had, however, been around long enough to recognize the rarity of their mutual identification, which was more what you would expect from twins. They would even wake in the night and head for the fridge at the same time. And they clung to each other and fused together like two drops of mercury, or even better than that, because complete union would have killed the small amount of friction that produced those crackling discharges, the blinding flashes of lightning, the moment of near-death when the world stands still in a void of bliss.

They didn't know how lucky they were. They had everything they could wish for—powerful athletic bodies, quick reactions, rigorous brains, and the self-confidence of winners who have never suffered so much as a scratch. They had retired from their sports just as they were approaching their limits, one step ahead of inevitable defeat. Now they were readying themselves for their scientific careers, at the country's best educational institution and with one of its most demanding faculties. The world, it seemed, was their oyster, and it had agreed in advance to spill its pearls at their feet.

The first-year curriculum was overloaded with general subjects; there were an enormous number of lectures and sessions in the laboratory. At the end of the first semester, they passed all the exams with top grades, confirming their élite status, and their grants were increased.

By this point, nobody in their year was unaware of them. Some they irritated, some they attracted, but everybody was intrigued.

During the winter vacation, Tanya had her first abortion, carried out professionally, expertly, and with much more effective anesthesia than was common at the time. It was the first negative experience they had shared, but they emerged from it without evident damage and became, if anything, even closer. No thoughts about the baby entered their highly organized minds. It had been an absurdity—indeed, a sickness—of which they had needed to be cured as promptly as possible. Andrey's mother, Alla Semyonovna, a good and unpretentious woman who had played an active part in the medical undertaking, had greater qualms about it than the couple did. She and her second husband had no children, and Alla was more aware than most of the capricious fragility of the feminine equipment.

Alla Semyonovna liked Tanya, although she was alarmed by her independent manner, and also by the benign obliviousness she showed toward Alla and her husband, Boris Ivanovich. It seemed to be a matter of complete indifference to Tanya what they thought of her.

"They really do have such a lot in common, the two of them," Alla confided to her husband. "They are a perfect couple, Boris, a perfect couple."

Boris, raising his sexless white face from the newspaper, agreed, slightly shifting his wife's thought in the process. "Well, yes, two boots make a pair."

He had never brought himself to love Alla's son, and in truth he had not tried

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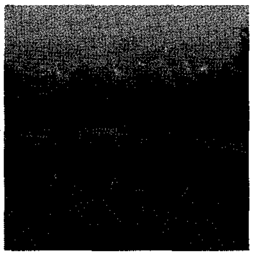

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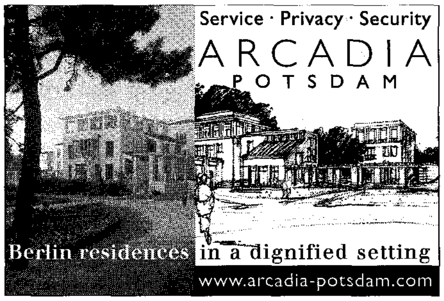

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all that hard. The son of a peasant, the eighth child in a poor family, he found all this Jewish doting over children fairly wearying.

Tanya's mother, Galina Yefimovna, knew about the abortion, too, but in her eyes her daughter could do no wrong. She had never tried to instruct Tanya and couldn't imagine where her strong character and remarkable gifts had come from. From Sokolov, she supposed, though she had never noticed any such virtues in him before he'd abandoned her.

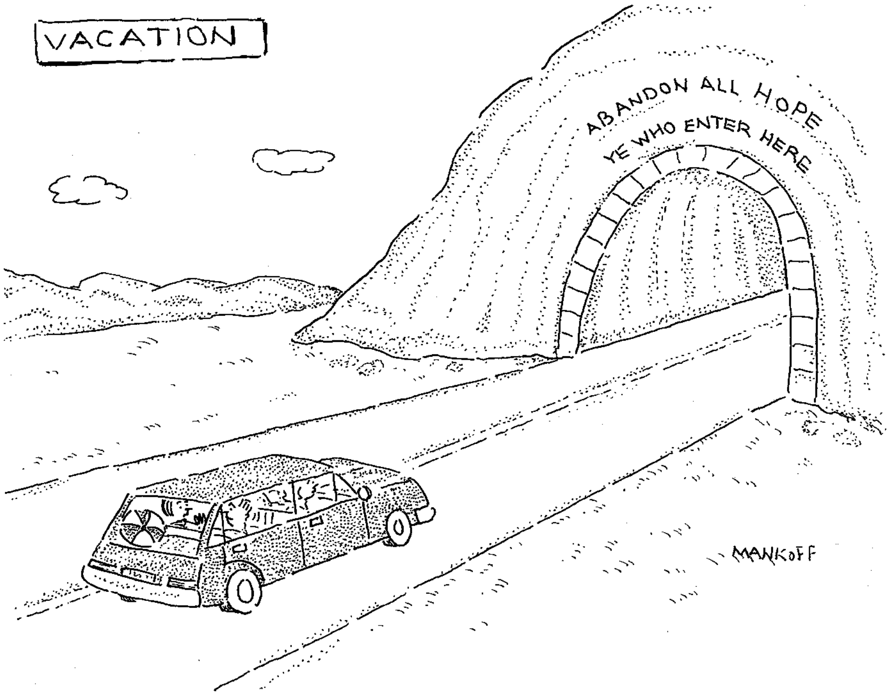
Galina was, however, privately regretful for a couple of months. Stealing occasional hangdog glances at her daughter, she could not understand how Tanya, not yet nineteen, could be so unabashed. When Galina hinted that it might be a good idea to formalize her relations with Andrey, Tanya gave a curt shrug and said, "Why would we want to do that?"

Their winter vacation was spoiled, of course. Instead of going skiing, as planned, they spent a week at the dacha, opening their embraces to each other very carefully. For them, the procedure had no moral stigma, but it had entailed a number of inconveniences that they would prefer to avoid in the future.

Classes recommenced, and they were far from easy. The couple had studied together during the first semester, either at the library or at Andrey's home, and although both of them had scored top grades, Andrey nevertheless proved to have the better mind. He solved problems more elegantly, more interestingly, with greater mental agility. His superiority rankled Tanya sometimes, particularly when he expressed surprise at her slowness. Tanya would take offense, and then there would be a reconciliation, but she began studying without him, in her communal flat with her mother by her side and with the quiet murmur of music on the radio.

They both achieved excellent grades on the spring exams also, and by now their fame had spread beyond the students. The professors also regarded them as rising stars. The only thing that could blight the prospect of a brilliant future was that both had neglected the obligatory "social activism." Worse, they were not discreetly neglectful but overtly so. Here, too, they were in complete agreement: the Soviet state was beyond redemption and Soviet society was degenerate.

It was, however, the society in which they had to live, and the question was to what degree they would have to accommodate themselves to the system. Both had joined the Young Communist League and supposed, for no very good reason, that this was where the line could be drawn. Theirs were the problems of the nineteen-sixties generation, problems that had seeped down to them from people like Andrey's stepfather. Boris was a former frontline soldier, an honest but



prudent man enthusiastic about atomic energy, which in those years seemed to offer power and prosperity rather than catastrophe and disgrace. To such people, a career in science seemed to promise the least likelihood of ideological interference in their lives, a hope that had yet to be disappointed. Solzhenitsyn was already being read over dissident radio stations, samizdat was being passed from hand to hand, and Tanya and Andrey slipped boldly into the double life typical of the masters of miscellaneous sciences.

Having done their requisite stint of factory work, they went on vacation for a month and a half to the Baltic states, where they swam in the cold sea, fell asleep on the distilled white sands beneath stately pines, drank the revolting Riga Balsam, and ventured into the dangerous dance palaces of Jurmala. Then it was Vilnius's turn to receive them, and they found Lithuania even more agreeable than Latvia, perhaps because they met up there with a lively group from Moscow who were five years or so older than they. Playing cards on the beach, they developed friendships that would prove long-lasting. Until their graduation, every New Year and birthday was celebrated with this new circle of acquaintances—a young doctor, a would-be writer, a scientist from the faculty of physics and technology who already was what Andrey hoped someday to be, a young actress who was rapidly becoming (but never quite became) famous, a very bright philosopher who later turned out to be a K.G.B. informer, and a married couple who lodged in everyone's memory as the ideal pair.

In the autumn, Tanya had another abortion. This time, Alla made her disapproval clear but again arranged everything for them, and it was quickly and smoothly done. Tanya was regarded as part of the family by now, and even Boris Ivanovich, who paid attention to nothing other than his beloved Alla and his meals, took a liking to her; she had a good brain. He went to America for a conference and brought back presents for everyone, including a pair of white jeans for Tanya. Amazingly enough, they fit perfectly. Tanya was very pleased and twirled in front of the mirror, prompting Andrey to concede jokingly, "That's the last straw. Now I'm going to have to marry you!"

Tanya stopped wiggling her backside, turned her little head on its long slender neck, and said, a little tartly, "No, you won't."

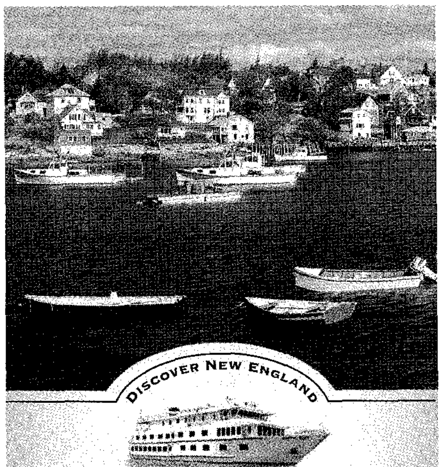
By now, in their third year together, Andrey was pulling confidently ahead of Tanya. She followed a short distance behind, and had almost reconciled herself to the fact. Grades no longer mattered as much as they had in previous years. Everybody had been assigned to different departments and laboratories, and the most active students had had their first publications. Those who had chosen a more direct career path were already sitting on Communist Party committees, local committees, and trade-union committees, taking minutes and voting and distributing tickets to the New Year's party in the Kremlin, or gifts of sturgeon, or places on group tours.

These goodies held no allure for Tanya Sokolova and Andrey Orlov. Everything they needed they already had. Indeed, they both had a scientific article to their credit—co-authored, of course, by the director of their laboratory. Despite the independently written articles, they grew even closer when both of them unexpectedly chose to work in a slightly backwater discipline—crystallography—rather than in something trendy, like theoretical or nuclear physics.

Crystallography lay at the intersection of chemistry and mathematics. Tanya busied herself with spectrophotometers, while Andrey worked at night in the Computing Center at a computer that filled one entire story of the building.

Before the beginning of their fifth year, Tanya underwent what had become her annual autumn abortion and they returned to their studies. Tanya's mother on this occasion ventured to express her view that Andrey was a complete asshole. Tanya did not take up the subject, only grunting, "I'll work it out myself, O.K.?"

With postgraduate studies looming, the Orlov-Sokolovs needed to obtain recommendations from those very representatives of Soviet public opinion whom they had so studiously disregarded. Tanya's synthetic-leather skirts, knee boots, and other fashion accessories were also going to have an effect, and not to her advantage. Tolya Poroshko, the Young Communist League organizer for their class and the third signatory re-



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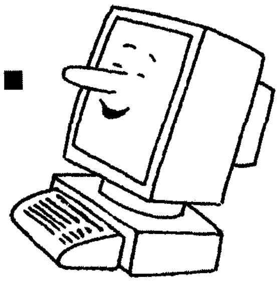
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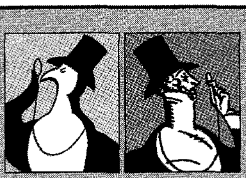
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quired for their references, along with a representative of their trade union and the university administrator, announced for all to hear that he was prepared to sign anything as long as it included the line "Takes no part whatsoever in the social and political life of the faculty."

Poroshko was a rustic lad from western Ukraine, a good-looking, ill-natured idiot, and he could scent blood in a way that any personnel department could only dream of. He took the measure of the Orlov-Sokolovs at first sight; by insisting on his formulation, he could have them automatically excluded from postgraduate study.

The Orlov-Sokolovs now revealed their cunning. Andrey, a qualified boxing referee, had been providing his services to the physical-education department, and Tanya had been running a gymnastics club for the past two years at a school affiliated with the university. All this had been for a purpose, of course, and the physical-education department wrote them effusive references testifying to their valued social contributions. Poroshko got egg on his face and a lesson, as he saw it, in the omnipotence of the Jewish-Masonic conspiracy.

As far as the crystals were concerned, things could not have been better. Symmetry was just then coming into fashion, and crystals displayed all manner of symmetrical delights. Everyone agreed that the two postgraduate places allotted to the department were clearly theirs by right. In late May, however, after they had defended their degrees, one of the places was taken away. The head of the department, a decent and intelligent man, summoned the Orlov-Sokolovs to his office. He had a high regard for them and he knew how difficult this was going to be. He had already arranged a good temporary placement at one of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences. The probationer would be working on the same topic and, in effect, also under his direction. He had decided to let the couple choose who went where, although his personal preference was for Andrey to get the postgraduate place.

They asked for a day to think about it, and walked to the metro in silence. Both knew that the postgraduate place had to go to Andrey, but each left it to the other to speak first. When they reached the station, Andrey gave in.

"It's for you to choose," he said.

"I already have." Tanya smiled.

"Well, fine. I'll take what's left."

Each was as strong-willed as the other, neither giving an inch.

At the Park of Culture station, she butted him in the ear with her crewcut, and stood up. "I'm going home."

"I thought we were going to—" They had been planning to visit friends that evening.

"I'll see you there a bit later," she said, and walked off the train on her improbably high heels.

The pointed toes of her shoes were, Andrey knew, stuffed with cotton wool, because her shoes were always too big for her. It was difficult to find her unusually small size.

Her feet were small, she had a deep scar beneath her knee, a narrow trail of hair down her flat stomach, large nipples that took up half of her small breasts, and arms and legs that were a bit too short. So were her fingers and toes. Her neck was exquisite. She had a wonderful oval face.

She took all that with her, and he went home in a bad mood, annoyed and hurt. It really was about time she understood that he . . . but this was the one thing they never talked about.

They met up a few hours later at their friends' apartment. It wasn't a great evening. Andrey suffered an attack of malicious wit and several times insulted the hostess, which didn't improve matters. They left late, feeling grumpy. Andrey got a taxi, and they rode to his parents' place, where Andrey had only a hundred square feet to himself.

They lay together in the darkness on a narrow divan that left no room for sulking, and he began talking as soon as he sensed that he was getting his way.

"You're being silly, Tanya. I am the man, for heaven's sake. Rely on me. Don't feel bad about it. I love you. We share everything. We have everything in common."

She said nothing, and they shared everything fully. When they had finished, Tanya said in a desolate voice, "I think I'm up the creek again."

He turned on the light and lit a cigarette. She buried her face in her pillow to hide from the light.

"Well, it's time to go for it, I reckon. Have the baby this time. A girl, O.K.?"

THE ABOVE-THE-SEA WORLD OF JACQUES COUSTEAU

What can I tell you of my life,
I who barely can remember?
What was logged was sunk,
like wet clothes or bodies when their owners
have grown sick of them. Like pets into the lime.
Of course, everyone I met was strange,
and maybe they thought the same of me:
how I reached and recoiled like an anemone,
how the sounds of breathing and of blood
surrounded me. The ceiling of my bedroom shimmered
with the reflection of an imaginary swimming pool.
Someone, loving me, said my eyes were glassy,
like the bottom of a boat, but what was there,
what I had and lost, I never fathomed.

—*Dana Goodyear*

"Oh, I get it. You go for the postgraduate place and I go for a baby and changing diapers."

If she had been the type to cry, she would have cried then. As he realized.

Tanya filled out the forms for the job at the institute, had an abortion, and took off for the south. Andrey stayed behind to take the qualifying exams for the postgraduate fellowship. Before she left, they went to the registry office and filled out an application to have their relationship officially recognized, which Andrey considered essential. They still felt dreadful. Neither had done quite what he or she had meant to, and each still harbored a certain amount of resentment toward the other.

Andrey saw her off at the station. She would not be travelling alone. Part of their group of friends was already in Koktebel, and now the rest were going to join them. They were travelling in style, paying an unbelievably high supplement to have two train compartments to themselves.

Andrey and Tanya kissed on the platform, and she climbed onto the steps of the train. Stooping down, she waved to him. That was the way he would remember her in this last moment of their life together: wearing a man's red shirt with the cuffs unbuttoned and a ridiculously long scarf draped around her slender neck. This was her personal sense of style—she would start wearing something unusual, and then others would follow her lead.

The train moved off, and he shouted to her, "Don't go falling in love with Vitya!"

It was a standing joke in their group. Vitya, the would-be writer, was starting to have some success and he had girls buzzing around him like bees around a honeypot.

"If I do, I'll tell you straightaway! By telegram!" Tanya shouted, already moving away toward the south.

Tanya Sokolova never did come back to Andrey Orlov. She called him some ten days later, in the middle of the night, waking up Boris Ivanovich, who in the morning told Andrey exactly what he thought of him.

Tanya told Andrey that she would not be coming back. She was moving to another city now and—well, see you around!

Understanding exactly what had happened, and why, Andrey said in a sleepy voice, "Thank you for phoning, Tanya."

She was silent for a time before giving in. "How did the exams go?"

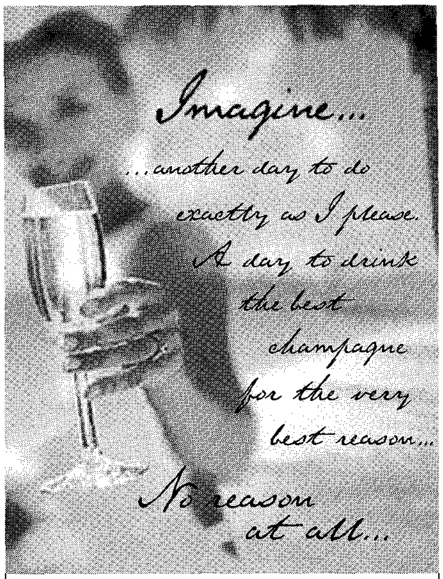
"Fine."

She was silent again, because she really had not expected him to take it so coolly. "Well, so long."

"So long."

He hung up first.

Andrey's mother went around to see Tanya's mother. Galina just raised her eyes to Heaven. She had known nothing



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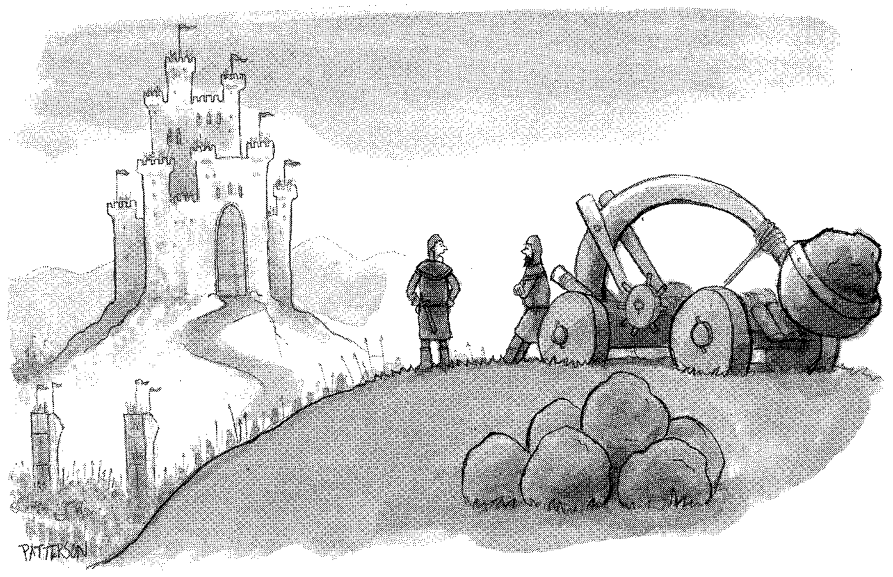


"It would be a shame if they surrendered before we had a chance to shoot this."

• •

about the phone call or about Tanya's change of plans. She was so genuinely and deeply upset that Alla Semyonovna instinctively consoled her. They agreed that Galina would let Alla know as soon as Tanya resurfaced.

A few days later, she called. She informed her mother that everything was splendid, and that she was calling not from the Crimea but from Astrakhan. The line was poor. She promised to write a long letter. Galina tried to shout something about Andrey, but the line went dead.

We lost the connection, that's all, Galina thought, but she feared for Tanya. How quickly she had changed direction. How recklessly she was living. What was she doing in Astrakhan, anyway?

Not far from Astrakhan, in a fishing village hidden away among the marshes, lived the family of Vitya the writer. His father had been the deputy director of the marvellous Askaniya-Nova nature preserve. A local workingman who had enjoyed accelerated promotion, he had died a few years earlier, but a number of his relatives remained. Vitya had fished up his first stories and a novella from the nearby Akhtuba River.

The village was a poacher's dream, a realm of fish and caviar, shallow waters, and dense reed beds. The local lads cruised around on motorboats instead of bicycles, and Tanya and her writer, with a sharp tug on the outboard motor's starter, would take off in the early morning and head for a remote sandbank upstream.

She gloried in the hot golden sand and in her new love for this huge man, who was close to six feet three. His entire physique was different from Andrey's. This was fine, this was excellent, if a bit awkward. He was constantly amazed at how small she was. He would cup her little foot in the palm of his hand, and it seemed quite lost. He was only thirty but already fairly jaded, having gone through a succession of women whom he had, not unreasonably, failed to trust. With this small person, however, he was a giant, and their romance was the more piquant for her having dumped her fiancé for him. The fact that Vitya knew Andrey well, felt protective toward him as a younger colleague, always lost to him at cards, and had got drunk at his house more than once only added to the thrill.

Even before the hair had grown back on Tanya's shaved pubis, she could tell that she was pregnant again. "And this time I'm going to have the baby," she exulted, with a sense of triumphant vengeance.

She lolled on the sand with her writer for the better part of a month before she began to find the smell of fish intolerable, and in these parts potatoes cost far more than sturgeon.

Vitya put his hand on her taut, athletic belly and anxiously wondered aloud, "How will everything fit in there? This is going to be a big baby!"

He was incredibly curious about the goings on in her belly, already loved what was living there and felt concern for it. He would fall asleep, resting all of Tanya on his shoulder and with his hand sealing her prickly-ticklish muscular entrance and exit.

They registered their union at the village office in five minutes flat. The director of this modest institution was the friend of a cousin. No advance application was needed. They took in their passports, paid one ruble twenty, and in return received a marriage certificate rubber-stamped in violet.

Having sunbathed, got sunburned, peeled, and gained a suntan, Tanya returned to Moscow in mid-August. Without warning, she took Vitya straight home and announced to Galina, "Mom, this is my husband, Vitya."

Galina was dumbfounded. Heavens above! The girl just did whatever came into her head.

He was not particularly good-looking, this husband of hers. He had a plebeian face, thin hair parted down the middle, and a coarse, prominent brow. He was a large man, which makes a big impression on small women, but he was also unexpectedly well spoken and had good manners.

Galina went to the kitchen with the kettle and did not return for a long time. When Tanya went to see what had happened, she found her mother on a stool beside the bathroom, weeping bitterly. She was so sorry to have lost Andrey.

Real life began in earnest. Tanya started her job, and Andrey came to the institute to see her, not yet knowing that she was married. Tanya and Vitya had said nothing to their mutual friends, and so far the marriage was a secret.

"Let's go and sit somewhere," Andrey suggested.

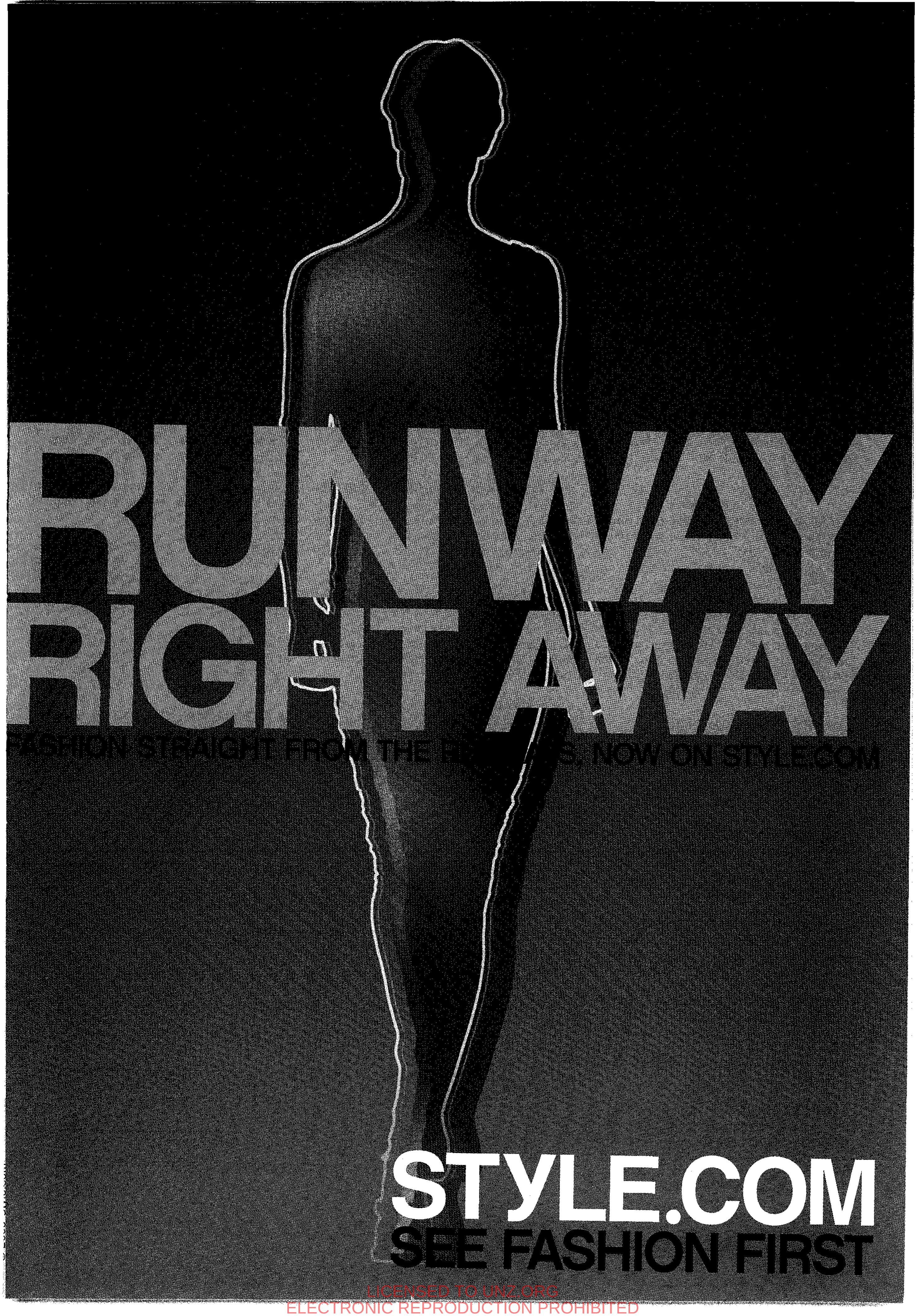
"Here's a bench." Tanya sat down on the nearest one.

He told her to stop playing the fool. She told him she was married.

"To Vitya?" he guessed astutely.

"Yes."

"Well, fine. Let's go around to his house right now and collect your things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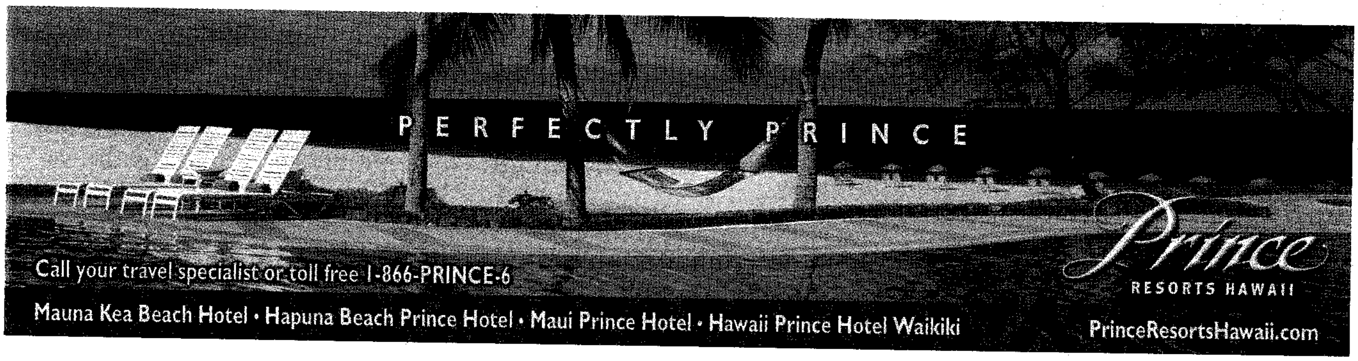

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so that there's no misunderstanding." He made the suggestion so confidently that for a moment Tanya believed she would do it.

"I'm pregnant, Andrey."

"That doesn't matter. You'll have to have another abortion. One last time." Andrey shrugged.

"No," Tanya said gently. "I can't do that anymore."

He took out a cigarette and lit it. "All this because of that shitty fellowship?" he asked viciously.

Tanya had already thought this over many times. She knew that she would soon be leaving the institute; her interest in crystals had depended on having Andrey by her side. Now she had no interest at all in finding out why the crystals in the druse of one rock were dextrogyrate while those in another were levogyrate.

What she did not yet know was that one of the twin boys she would give birth to would be left-handed. It would be a strange and delightful surprise.

If Andrey were to say to her now, "You can have the fellowship, I'll take the temporary post," would her interest in crystals revive? Something had gone, unpredictably, wrong. There had been a glitch, a malfunction of some kind in their destiny, but . . . now it had happened. There was nothing to be done.

She stood up, placed her finger on the top of his head, and ran it down his forehead to his chin, where she put a full stop. "No, Andrey, no. *Amour perdu.*"

They next met eleven years later, at the seaside in the Crimea, in the place they used to go to when they were young. They were there with what was left of the old crowd: the physicist had emigrated to America, and the ideal married couple was no more, since he had died in a car crash, but she now had another, equally ideal family. Through their mutual friends, Andrey and Tanya had advance warning that they would meet up again on this holiday.

Andrey came with his wife and five-year-old daughter. Tanya was with her ten-year-old twins, scrawny bespectacled boys who were already taller than she was. Her husband was staying in Moscow to work on a novel about the life of a fish, having already written about the lives of various other animals. It was his way of fighting the Soviet system, but it fell considerably short of "Animal Farm."

Tanya had changed less than Andrey, who had put on a lot of weight. This was not something a person of his height could afford to do. He was now a doctor of science. Tanya had longer hair than before, and had exchanged her bikinis for one-pieces, her once bewitching belly crisscrossed with coarse Soviet stitching left by her Cesarean section. Otherwise she was just the same: she did gymnastics on the beach, wore extravagant outfits, and stuffed wedges of cotton wool in the toes of her shoes.

They had all brought their kids. They walked to coves near and far and taught the children to swim and to play card games. Andrey and Tanya met only when other people were present, at large gatherings, and said nothing meaningful to each other. From time to time, Tanya noticed the anxious gaze of Andrey's wife, Olga, resting on her, but she found this merely amusing. Olga was tall, and had a good figure, was almost pretty, and belonged firmly in the bimbo category. Andrey would occasionally tell her to shut up, and she would flap eyelashes heavy with mascara and pout. Their daughter was a sweet little thing.

A few days before they went home, everybody decided to camp out at Seagull Bay. It was the kind of outing the children loved. Tanya said in advance that she did not want to go, but her sons begged and begged until the ideal family agreed to take them. Tanya was tired of having people around her all the time and wanted a day on her own. She had made no prior arrangement with Andrey, and indeed genuinely did not know that he, too, had decided against joining the excursion.

After seeing the children off early in the morning, Tanya spent the day lounging around, reading Thomas Mann in her muggy room, dozing off, waking up, and dozing off again. It was evening before she got out of her chair, took a shower, shaved her armpits, made herself a facial with the cucumbers in the garden, brewed some coffee, and took it out to the garden table. This was the moment that Andrey appeared.

"Hello, Tanya. What are you up to?"

"Having my morning coffee. Want a cup?" She answered him, aware that this was the moment she had been waiting for all month.

"I don't drink coffee. It makes my ears go all buzzy." It was a phrase they had used in the old days. "Let's imbibe some of the local beverages."

They strolled down to the promenade, where Crimean wines were sold directly from the barrel. Tanya was relaxed and euphoric, the unbuttoned cuffs of her man's white shirt flapping. They drank the white Aligoté, then the local port, then the sticky-sweet red Kokur, constantly putting off a moment that was already behind them.

Everybody else was renting rooms in private homes. Only Andrey was living like a general in a small separate cottage on the grounds of a military sanatorium. The medical director had ceded his official accommodation in return for a large sum of money.

They walked along the embankment a hairbreadth from each other, talking inconsequentially about the weather. They had done the rounds of the wine barrels and were walking back to the sanatorium, rather than to Tanya's accommodation. They went in through the service entrance and across the crunching gravel, straight to the little cottage set among rosebushes. The door was unlocked, and they didn't turn on the light.

"Just, please, don't say a word . . ."

Oh, what a lot I'd forgotten: the metal brace behind his front teeth where they were knocked out. . . . No, I hadn't forgotten; my tongue in here, under the brace . . .

My poor dear home, given over to a stranger. Your porch, your steps, your front door . . . your walls, your hearth! What have you done, Tanya?

Andrey, what have you done? Instead of those three children, there might have been someone quite different. Perhaps not only one. . . . What have we done?

These were not two foolish cells rushing toward each other for a mindless continuation of the species. Every cell, every filament in their being was thirsting to enter the other and be still, be one.

Wordlessly, the flesh lamented until morning. Then it came to its senses. They still had a full day before them. They had something to eat and crawled back under the crumpled sheet. Tanya ran her finger from the top of his head to his chin.

Andrey saw very clearly how it was going to be: the others would come back from the cove, get their things together, and return to Moscow. He would take his family home, and then he would take Tanya and her boys to the dacha. It would be cold in the winter. His car would get stuck in the snowdrifts. He would clear a path to the gate with a wooden shovel and drive the boys to school. Olga and his daughter . . . well, he had no idea what they would do. Perhaps he would have to take Vera to kindergarten as well.

Tanya supposed that Vitya would just shrug it off. He would probably even be pleased and run off to some other woman. It was difficult to imagine Andrey in her house. *He must have worn out his red terry-cloth dressing gown by now. He doesn't drink coffee in the morning, only tea. And, then, the crystals. Of course, there are the crystals to think about. Actually, that might be the biggest worry. What's to be done about the crystals?*

Tanya wanted it more than anything in the world, he could tell, and that was why he said nothing. Neither did she, but eventually she gave in.

"Well, then?" This could be interpreted in many different ways.

What a fantastic figure Olga has, though. Those breasts, that waist, those legs. No, this isn't going to work.

He ran his finger over Tanya's face. "*Amour perdu.* Time to get up."

She jumped up lightly, laughed, and shook her head. Short hair had suited her better.

"No, you can't fool me. Not *perdu.*"

"It's not on, Tanya."

She put on the white shirt, raised herself on her improbably high heels, and left.

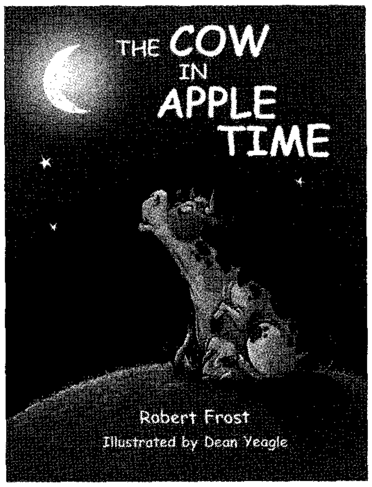
The next morning, Olga was sweeping the cottage. With the broom, she brushed a triangle of cotton wool out of a corner.

"Yuck! What's this?"

Andrey gave it a glance. She really must have been born yesterday. Well, he thought, how could she know what it was for? "I feel I've had about enough of this holiday," he said. "Why don't we go back a bit early? Maybe tomorrow?"

Olga was amenable. "Anything you say, Andryushka." ♦

(*Translated, from the Russian, by Arch Tait.*)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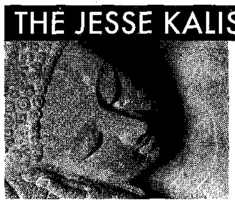
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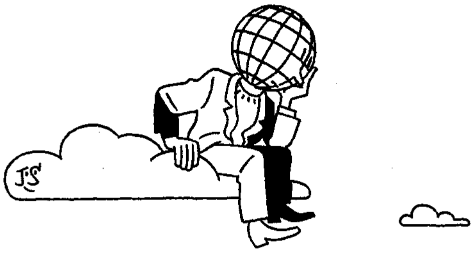
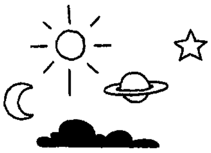




BOOKS

PIECEWORK

The writings of Sybille Bedford.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

The English novelist Sybille Bedford is more than a novelist. She worked as a court reporter, covering notorious trials—the case of Stephen Ward, the society doctor at the center of the Profumo scandal, in London in 1963; the trial of Jack Ruby, in Dallas in 1964; the proceedings against twenty-two members of the Auschwitz staff, in Frankfurt from 1963 to 1965—for magazines such as *Esquire* and *Life*. She also produced articles on food and wine. She was a travel writer, too, zooming around Europe to report back—again, for big magazines—on the shopwindows of Zurich and the sixteen lakes of Plitvice. Often, she blended the subjects of travel and food. To her, it seems, they were one subject, the goodness of life. In a travel piece on France and Italy, she can't not talk about the wines. Italian wines are "easy and companionable," she writes. "You can do with them what you never would with a hock or claret, trundle them about in a car, opened and all, fling in a handful of ice, drink them without a glass, drink them at all hours, with any food, in carefree quantities." This is the voice of a person who knows more than wine; she knows how to live—how to stay up late and swig from the bottle and have fun.

She may have had too much fun, because she also spent many years not writing. Most of the long magazine pieces were bunched together in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. The novels came out haltingly. For that reason, and also because her interests were so widely dispersed, she is something of a loose piece in the literary canon. In England, people over forty know her name; she got the O.B.E. in 1981; her 1989 novel "Jigsaw" was nominated for the Booker Prize. But she is one of those writers who now and then come out of the woodwork, to loud exclamation, and then go right back in. "Bedford's mind is radiant," V. S. Pritchett said of one of her novels. "When the history of modern prose in English comes to be written, Mrs. Bedford will have to appear in any list of its most dazzling practitioners," Bruce Chatwin wrote of another of her books. After the appearance of her first novel, she says, various publishers took to sending her roses and smoked salmon. She no doubt enjoyed such tributes, and then, until she felt like it, she wrote nothing whatsoever.

Very little was known about her private life. A journalist once asked her if she could say anything about the Mr. Bedford whom, it is recorded, she married in 1936. "No," she replied. Soon after the marriage, she left for the United States, to wait out the war, and spent six years here. Doing what? Shortly after her return to Europe, she published her first book, at the age of forty-two. Why so late a start? And what about her love life? Mr. Bedford notwithstanding, the autobiographical heroine of one of her novels has a number of heated sexual encounters with women. Was Mrs. Bedford homosexual? When Shusha Guppy, in a 1993 interview for *The Paris Review*, tiptoed up to this question, Bedford stonily answered that novels were fiction, not fact. Another interviewer, obviously groping in desperation for a topic that she might be willing to address, inquired whether she had ever owned a pet. "Yes and no," she replied. "It's a complicated question."

Now, however, at the age of ninety-four, she has written a memoir, "Quicksands" (Counterpoint; $24)—it will be published next month—and in it she does answer some of these questions. The late start as a writer? When she was in her twenties, she says, she wrote three novels, all of them bad imitations of her friend and mentor Aldous Huxley; no one wanted to publish them; she gave up. Homosexual? Yes, apparently. She names the women she lived with. (Bisexual may be closer to the truth, however.) Mr. Bedford? That marriage was one of the completely pragmatic unions made around the time of the Second World War between people with endangered passports or Jewish blood (Sybille Bedford, at that time a German citizen, had both) and willing homosexuals of safer standing. After W. H. Auden stepped forward to marry Thomas Mann's daughter Erika, in 1935, Aldous Huxley's wife said, "We must get one of our bugger friends to marry Sybille." A candidate was found, who, as arranged, vanished swiftly after the ceremony, leaving Sybille a British citizen. This was what enabled her to spend the war years in the United States. She has lived for the past three decades in London, and though she was raised in four different languages, she is an English writer.

So we find out all these things in "Quicksands," but in a scattered, sidelong way. The main subject of the new book is her childhood, a subject on which Bedford has been as talkative as she has been silent about her adulthood. In her four novels—"A Legacy" (1956), "A Favorite of the Gods" (1963), "A Compass Error" (1968), "Jigsaw"—she told and retold the tale, turning it into a comedy, a tragedy, an allegory. Now she goes at it one more time. She can't help it.

Who could? It's an irresistible story. From what one can put together (the sources are both fact and fiction, so accuracy is a problem), Bedford's father, Baron Maximillian von Schoenebeck,

The author's writing desk. Bedford was raised in four languages, but she is an English writer. Photograph by Luciana Arrighi.

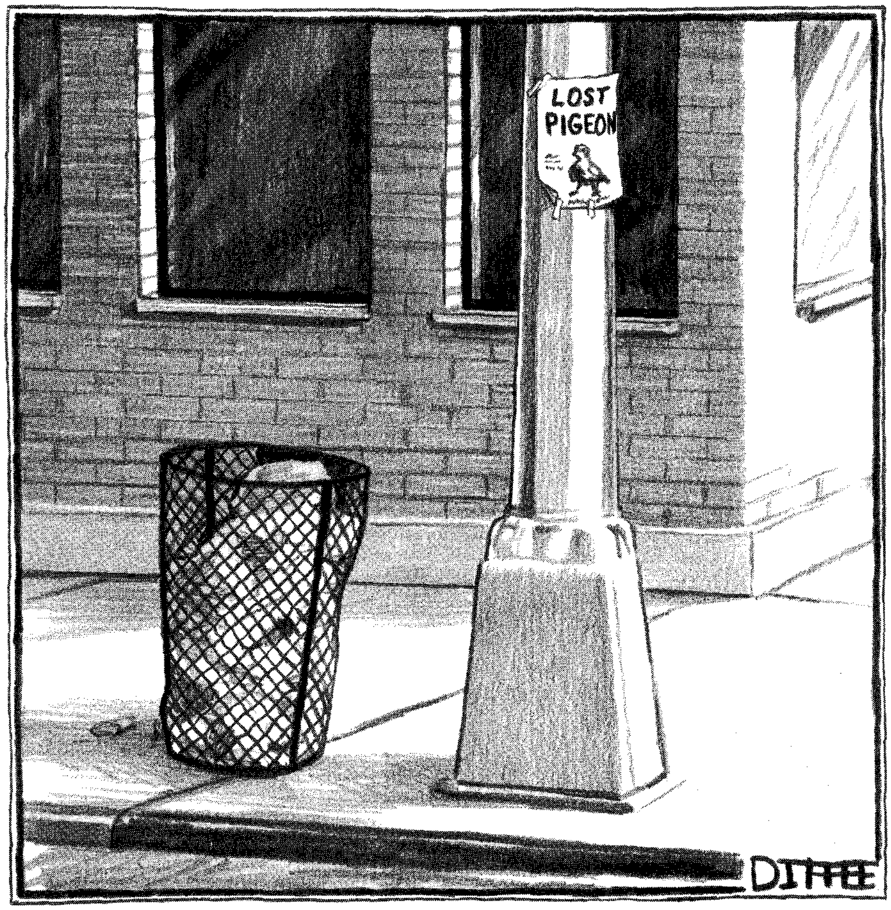
was born in the eighteen-fifties and grew up in Baden. He wanted to be a cabinet-maker, but the family needed money, so he went into the German diplomatic service. He didn't like it, though. Eventually, he solved his financial problems by marrying into a family from Berlin's *haute juiverie*. When that bride died, he took another: an Englishwoman, Elizabeth Bernard, who was rich, beautiful, brilliant, and many years his junior. As a wedding present she bought him a château near the Vosges, a few miles from the French border. Soon "the chores of maternity" were forced on Elizabeth—that is, Sybille was born, in 1911—but neither parent seems to have paid much attention to this development. Maximillian was some sixty years older than his new daughter, and he wasn't at ease with human beings, anyway. His one interest in life was collecting Renaissance antiques. As for the mother, Sybille was afraid of her. Furthermore, it was Elizabeth's habit to fall "seriously in love with another man every few years," and so she was away a lot.

When Sybille was eight, Elizabeth departed for good, and though Maximillian still had the château, he had no money to run it with. "The dining-room, the drawing-rooms, the Delft room, the library, the main kitchen and sculleries, my nursery and the guest-wing were shut up," Bedford recalls. The staff was let go. Sybille wandered like a stranger among the Gothic carvings that filled her father's house, and tried to steer clear of the resident ghost, Bishop Wessenberg, who had committed a "foul deed" in the hall above the cellar in an earlier time. At dinner, Maximillian told stories of his youth. "I lived in his stories," Bedford later wrote. "I played with bits of wood, pretending they were the horses he had as a boy." After dinner, he would play roulette with Sybille and his one remaining servant, Lina. "*Faites vos jeux!*" he would cry to his ragtag child and his housekeeper. They staked real money—Lina's wages, Sybille's allowance—but, if the ladies lost, the funds were returned in the morning. Thus they lived for about three years, until a letter came from Elizabeth, demanding a visit from Sybille. Maximillian sent the child off and promptly died of appendicitis.

When Sybille arrived at the Italian train station where she was to join her mother, she was collected instead by a young woman whom Elizabeth had met at the local hotel. So sorry! Elizabeth had gone off with a new lover, but she would come back. In time, she did, with the man—Alessandro (as he is called in Bedford's books), some fifteen years her junior—and found, to her bewilderment, that she was now Sybille's sole guardian. This problem was solved when the trustees of Maximillian's estate insisted on Sybille's receiving an education. Elizabeth sent her to a couple in England. (She had met them, too, at a hotel.) The English couple never arranged for much of an education, but they cashed the checks and treated Sybille kindly. Other families took her in as well. She remembers always being the child at the low end of the table, listening to what the adults were saying.

Elizabeth and Alessandro married and settled on the Riviera, in a little town, Sanary-sur-Mer, that later became a mecca for prewar intellectual refugees—the Huxleys, the Cyril Connollys, the Thomas Manns and other Germans. Sybille spent her teen-age summers there, learning about French food and twenties fun. The good times soon ended, however. Alessandro had an affair with another woman, and Elizabeth eased her pain with morphine. This rapidly became a full-scale addiction, with Sybille giving the injections and driving from town to town in search of a new pharmacist who would fill her mother's prescriptions. Alessandro left and returned repeatedly, but when Sybille was nineteen he walked out for good. On the last pages of "Jigsaw" Bedford describes his departure. Having packed his bags, he goes to Sybille's room at dawn and gives her his typewriter. If she has to live this, he seems to say, at least she can write about it.

She did, but very slowly. Only in "Jigsaw," published when she was almost eighty, did she describe her mother's drug habit, and only now, in "Quicksands," does she tell the end—a muffled and painful account. Like Alessandro, she finally left Elizabeth. To whom? To what? All she says is that her mother died after seven years of addiction, "I fear, though I hope not, alone." As for herself, other people, as usual, took her in.



This childhood gave Bedford the core of her art. In a tense moment in the *Paris Review* interview, Shusha Guppy speaks of Bedford's mother as a "monster." She was not a monster at all, Bedford replies: "She taught me everything about reading and people and telling stories about people." In other words, she showed her how to be a writer. The father did, too. Those tales he told of his youth became the material for "A Legacy." But stories were not all her parents gave her. These two figures—the father who loved her, but at a distance; the mother who didn't love her much, but whom she loved—were Bedford's moral education. From watching them she learned what she would later say about life: that good-enough people, often just by trying to make some adjustment in their circumstances, fall into sin and error; that you can gather this only by what you hear at the end of the table; that life is comical and sad, and justice hard to render. Bedford is best when her moral faculties are tightly engaged. This is true not just of her novels but also of her court reporting and even of her travel writing. The nice, prosperous, democratic countries—Switzerland, Denmark—tend to get the travel-magazine bedazzlement treatment. It is the poorer, crazier countries that bring out her real powers.

Mexico, for example. After her wartime exile in the United States, Bedford writes, she longed to visit a country with a minimum of "present history"—that is, Second World War history. Mexico was her choice, and it became the subject of her first published book (her only full-length travel book), "A Visit to Don Otavio," from 1953. In part, "Don Otavio" is classic travel writing. It provides a carefully meditated history of the country; it contains heart-stopping descriptions of the landscape. This being Mexico, we are also given the scenes of disorder and squalor so dear to old-time English travel writers, but we never quite get the note of astonished, white-man grouchiness that we find, to hilarious effect, on every page of Evelyn Waugh's accounts of his journeys. Bedford's astonishments, just as funny, are different. At one point, the bus on which she and her companion, "E.," are travelling to Guadalajara stops at a roadside café:

> On coming out again [we] found a mildly operatic outfit fumbling with the luggage ropes: three or four men in fine hats and bandanas tied over their faces on muleback, and a pack-mule.
>
> The driver and conductor shooed us back into the patio. "Gentlemen, we must wait for a moment," they addressed us with the disciplined calm of sea captains, "the bandits have come."
>
> "What bandits?" said E. . . .
>
> "They come down from the mountains at dusk," was kindly explained to her. "Bandits do not like to show themselves in broad daylight—there are certain prejudices—and they don't like to come out all that way at night, in the dark, when who knows what criminals and malefactors may be about."
>
> There was a clatter of hoofs, the conductor said briskly, "*Vamanos*"; we went outside and saw the train of mules cantering off. The luggage ropes had been retied; rather sloppily. Off we went.

When they arrive in Guadalajara, they find that all of E.'s clothes are gone. Balanced against this are the bandits' good manners: they retied the ropes. In Bedford's view, violence is endemic to Mexican life, but it is never committed with a whole heart. It is always mixed with courtesy, and comedy.

All of this is told with a tart, fresh empiricism. Here are the book's opening sentences:

> The upper part of Grand Central Station is large and splendid like the Baths of Caracalla.
>
> "Your rooms are on Isabel la Catolica," said Guillermo.
>
> "How kind of you," said I.
>
> "Pensión Hernandez."
>
> "What is it like?"
>
> "The manager is very unkind. He would not let me have my clothes when I was arrested. But you will have no trouble."

We never find out why Guillermo got arrested, or even who he is, but this little exchange is a perfect introduction to Bedford's style: speed, omission, the sharp bite of event, without the tedious explanation. She won't waste our time on what, she assumes, we already understand. That is one of the joys of reading her: she thinks we are as sophisticated as she is. Her writing is like the conversation of a clever, worldly friend who we wish would come by more often. Her sentences are frequently incomplete, her grammar non-standard, her chapter titles a brazen lie. In "Don Otavio," the chapter on the town of Querétaro gets to Querétaro only in the last paragraph, because Bedford wants to tell us about Mexican provincial inns:

> The ground floor is always a large, unkempt parlour opening into the patio without much transition, full of overgrown plants, wicker chairs, objects without visible use, birds free and caged, and a number of sleeping dogs. Here the innkeepers jot their accounts, sort the linen, drive bargains with the poultry woman and the egg child, arraign the servants, play the gramophone, drink chocolate, chat and doze; and here the guests sit, smoke cigars, have their hair cut, shout for servants, play the gramophone, drink rum and chocolate, chat and doze. Everyone has their own bottle, sent out for by the *mozo* [Indian servant]. The innkeeper would think you mad to pay him bar prices; every time you draw cork he will supply you—compliments of the house—with . . . fried anchovies, toasted tortillas strewn with crumbs of cheese and lettuce, stuffed cold maize dumplings and pickled chili peppers.

In Bedford's world, nobody is going to get ahead, or nobody nice, but meanwhile there is mercy, free hors d'oeuvres.

"Don Otavio" is not just a travelogue. Buried inside it is a little novel, about the title character, a man on whose doorstep she and E. presented themselves with a letter of introduction, as people did in those days. Don Otavio is a ruined aristocrat, like Bedford's father. Unlike Baron von Schoenebeck, however, he has seventeen servants to look after him. Bedford describes his morning routine:

> He appears on the terrace of the villa and claps his hands. *Niños*, the papayas must be picked. *Niño*, there are roses again in the water tank. Has the boat gone for the butter? Has Jesús made it up with his wife? Has Carmelita been able to do something about the spell on the tomatoes? Would she like the priest? The white turkey is not well: *niña*, the brandy flask, and a teaspoon. Is the cook herself again today? *Niñas*, there is that ibis sitting on the washing.

This pleasant life is soon threatened. Don Otavio has three brothers, all more modern-minded than he, and they decide that his beautiful eighteenth-century hacienda, which is their ancestral home, should be turned into a tourist hotel—the "Cherry Orchard" plot. I will not tell the ending. Everyone, whether or not he plans to visit Mexico, should read "A Visit to Don

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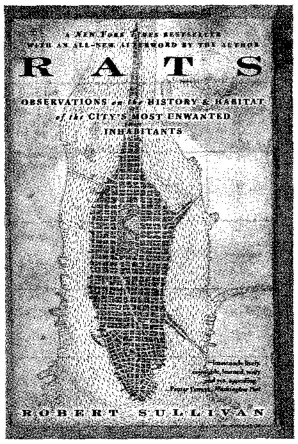

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Otavio." I will merely say that this is the only travel book I know of where one cries at the end.

"Don Otavio" was a success, and this gave Bedford the courage to try a novel again—not just a novel, actually, but one that explored the history of modern Germany. For Bedford and for all Western people of her time, the unavoidable event, the thing that changed their lives, was the consolidation of the Third Reich. In "A Legacy," through the weaving together of the lives of several families, her father's people and the clans they married into, Bedford traces the sources of this development, in tensions among the old Catholic nobility, the newly rich Jewish mercantile class, the nationalistic Prussians, and other groups. Thus "A Legacy" is not just a history of Germany but part of that great genre of early modern literature ("Buddenbrooks," "The Man Without Qualities," "The Radetzky March," "The Leopard," "Remembrance of Things Past") which explains how we lost the old world and got the new one. Finally, like a number of those other books, it is a full-blown, extravagant historical novel, replete with the turreted houses and liveried footmen, the loves and betrayals and purloined letters—a murder, too—which customarily enliven that form. The von Felden family, based on the von Schoenebecks, are Catholic aristocrats from the South. They are quiet and stuck in their ways, the narrator says:

> I learnt that . . . they had dined at exactly one hour after sunset and that my grandfather (or was it *his* father?) explained this to his guests as a custom of the Romans; I learnt that Julius and his brothers rode out any old how but were kept to be most particular about their dress when driving, that the boys were always given brandy and hot water when they came in from skating in the winter dusk, and that Johannes the third son had danced with a bear at a fair.

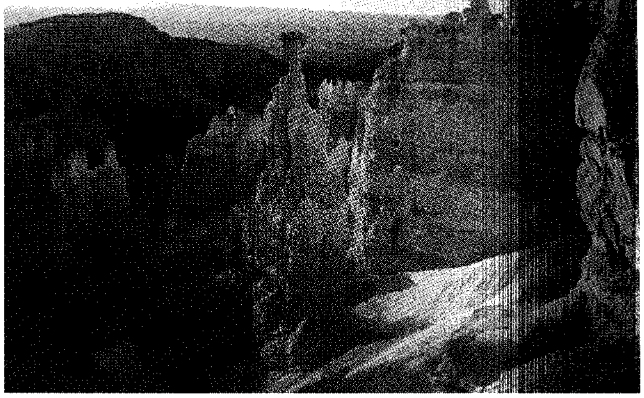
Then, there are the Merzes, rich Berlin Jews based on the family of Maximillian's first wife, who is called Melanie in the novel. The Merzes go nowhere and see no one and are perfectly happy. Their household is filled with wastrel sons and poor relations. Their butler has been with them for fifty-five years. Not just at dinner but many times a day, they eat vast meals. When their daughter-in-law Sarah comes by to tell them something important, "she sat almost silent through the cream of chicken, the crayfish in aspic, the vol-au-vent, the calf's tongue and currants in Madeira, the chartreuse of pigeon and the mousseline of artichokes." Only after the Nesselrode pudding does she deliver her message: Julius von Felden (based on Maximillian) thinks it necessary for Melanie, his intended, to share his religion. The parents are aghast, but Melanie is willing, and she sneaks out one night with her maid to do the job. But, thinking that all goys are the same, she gets herself baptized by a Protestant minister, and the whole thing has to be redone. This is Bedford's accustomed comedy—decent people, bumbling around, as in "Don Otavio"—but serious events flow from it. Accordingly, "A Legacy" is not as elastic in its structure as "Don Otavio." Still, there are the bright rushes of talk, the fast, vivid stories of how things were. I don't know of any novel about the early twentieth century that feels more real, as if you could reach out and touch the things in it. In 1976, Ecco Press reissued the book as part of a series called "Neglected Books of the Twentieth Century." The Ecco people were right, and thirty years later they still are.

Having finished "A Legacy," Bedford abandoned novel-writing for a number of years, turning instead to travel articles and court reporting. In 1961, she brought out a superb book, "The Faces of Justice," comparing the judicial systems of England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France. (This volume has been used in university courses on comparative law.) Later in the sixties, she returned to fiction and wrote "A Favorite of the Gods" and "A Compass Error," which are interesting primarily for their study of mother-daughter relationships, that matter which was still eating her liver. In 1973, she published a biography of Aldous Huxley and then fell virtually silent for sixteen years.

The Huxley biography, seven hundred and eighty-one pages of the great man's lucubrations and eye disorders, may have worn her out. Likewise the death of her longtime companion, the American novelist Eda Lord, who, as we learn in a few tight-lipped paragraphs in "Quicksands," was an alcoholic and had an unhappy end. Nor should we forget what Bedford repeatedly says of herself: that she had a "great natural sloth," that she liked going on picnics better than working. We should also keep in mind that her next projected book was on her mother. "A Legacy" ended when its narrator, age nine, arrived at the train station to meet her mother. In other words, Elizabeth's story—her brilliance, her selfishness, her drug addiction—remained to be told. It finally came out, in "Jigsaw," which Bedford says took years to write. I suspect it was a disembowelment. After "Jigsaw," she assembled some collections of her magazine pieces. ("Pleasures and Landscapes," from 2003, contains eight of her travel articles. Better, though out of print, is "As It Was," from 1990, because it includes the court-reporting articles as well.) Otherwise, Bedford seems to have written almost nothing for another sixteen years.

Now, in "Quicksands," she goes over her childhood once again and finishes her mother's story. She worries about repeating herself. She seems embarrassed, regretful. The book breathes a spirit of real woe ("Did I indicate that I had no family, no family to fall back on?") that is missing from her earlier reminiscences. The title, "Quicksands," says a lot. She would tell us more, she assures us, if she had time, but she is being sucked down. In fact, she is in full command of her powers. The problem with "Quicksands" is simply that it seems undermotivated. One feels that someone else talked her into writing it. With few exceptions, it is only the old material, the childhood, that really glows on the page. She knows this, and tries to make up for it. She jumps back and forth in time; we hear about Kosovo, and September 11th. As a result, the book is not just elastic; it is positively chaotic. That, too, she knows; she says that the book is "an amalgam of fragments," as she seems to feel her career has been. She has a fancy epistemological defense for this, but I don't think she believes it.

She should stop apologizing. If "Quicksands" is a sort of rummage sale, what of it? And if Bedford's best books, "A Visit to Don Otavio" and "A Legacy," were also her first books, never quite equalled in fifty years of further work, that takes nothing away from them. They were not "promising"; they delivered, then and there. Some writers are like that. ♦



Red Rock Country

By Nao Hauser

When springtime comes to Utah, the snow turns into a powerful sculptor. Melting off the Rockies into the Colorado River Basin, it changes from the powder beloved by skiers into the white water that rafters dream of. In the process it transforms, carving the desert to the south in the state's five national parks. The towering walls of Zion, the fairy-tale spires of Bryce Canyon National Park, the awesome domes of Capitol Reef, and the sandstone acrobatics of Arches and Canyonlands—this is Utah's retrospective of millions of years.

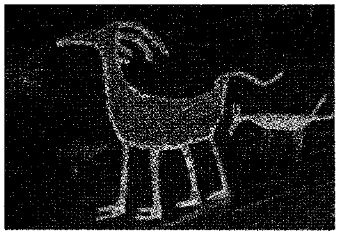
So bountiful has Utah's snow been this year that travelers can still enjoy powder at **Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort**, twenty-five miles southeast of Salt Lake City and 11,000-feet high, where the skiing won't end until Memorial Day. To check into the resort's Cliff Lodge is to find the panoramic escape of white-cloaked peaks with views from every room, including the romantic Aerie restaurant and the spa's yoga studio.

SANDSTONE SUBLIME

Go some three hundred miles to the south from Snowbird to Zion's desert terrain or to Bryce Canyon National Park and the only indulgence you'll find is sheer exhilaration. While the sights and the arid air are great for the mind, the body may crave lymphatic massages, facials, and rejuvenating hot-oil treatments. So book a suite (with or without a spa package) at the **Green Valley Spa** in St. George, where all the accommodations have fireplaces, Starbucks-stocked kitchenettes, and private honeysuckle-framed patios. If you'd rather wake up to the splendor of Zion's walls, the **Desert Pearl Inn** in Springdale is right at the park's doorstep; its large rooms have the warmth of wood floors and cathedral ceilings built with old-growth fir and redwood railroad trestles.

Visiting **Zion** is like entering water's atelier. You can stare at the grandeur of the steep cliffs from a path as tame as a sidewalk along the Virgin River. Those equipped with sufficient moxie and the proper hiking equipment can see the artist at work in the Zion Narrows by wading upstream along the riverbed through a sixteen-mile gorge flanked by walls thousands of feet high and sometimes only twenty- to thirty-feet wide. While it's a trip best-suited for the adventurous, the more cautious can observe the erosion at a gentler pace by walking up to the springs at Weeping Rock, where the water drips through sandstone to thirsty ferns and wildflowers.

Bryce Canyon is a two-hour drive east of Zion that takes you about 4,000 feet higher. Considered by geologists to be a naturally formed amphitheatre, it's filled with thousands of fantastical pink, white, and red spires, called hoodoos, that rise from the desert floor. On a round-trip drive of thirty-seven miles, you can stop at overlooks that hint at the park's brilliance with names like Sunrise, Rainbow, and Inspiration Point. Sunsets at Inspiration Point are spectacular, but to truly experience the amphitheatre, descend from the rim, by mule or foot along a network of trails.



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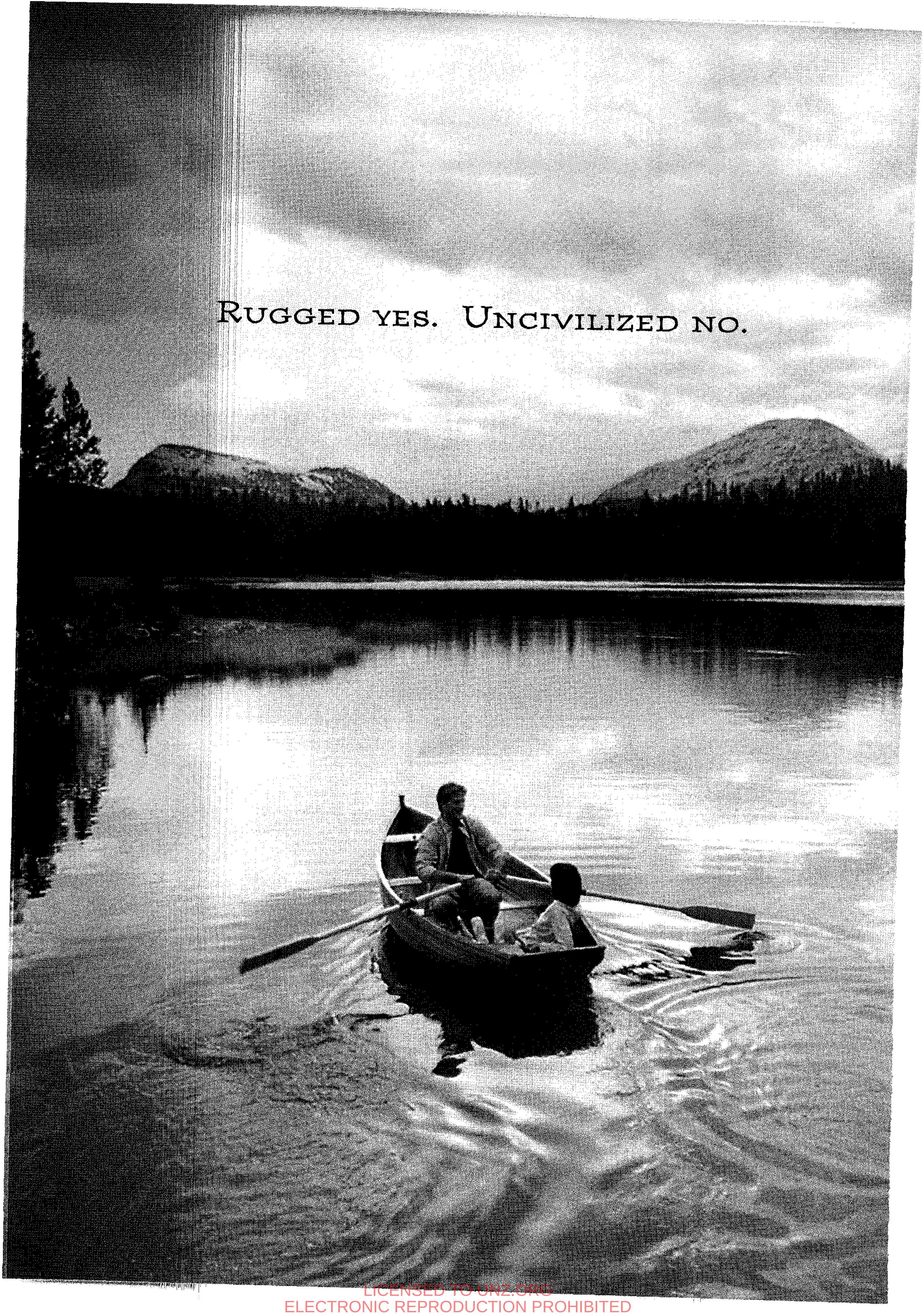
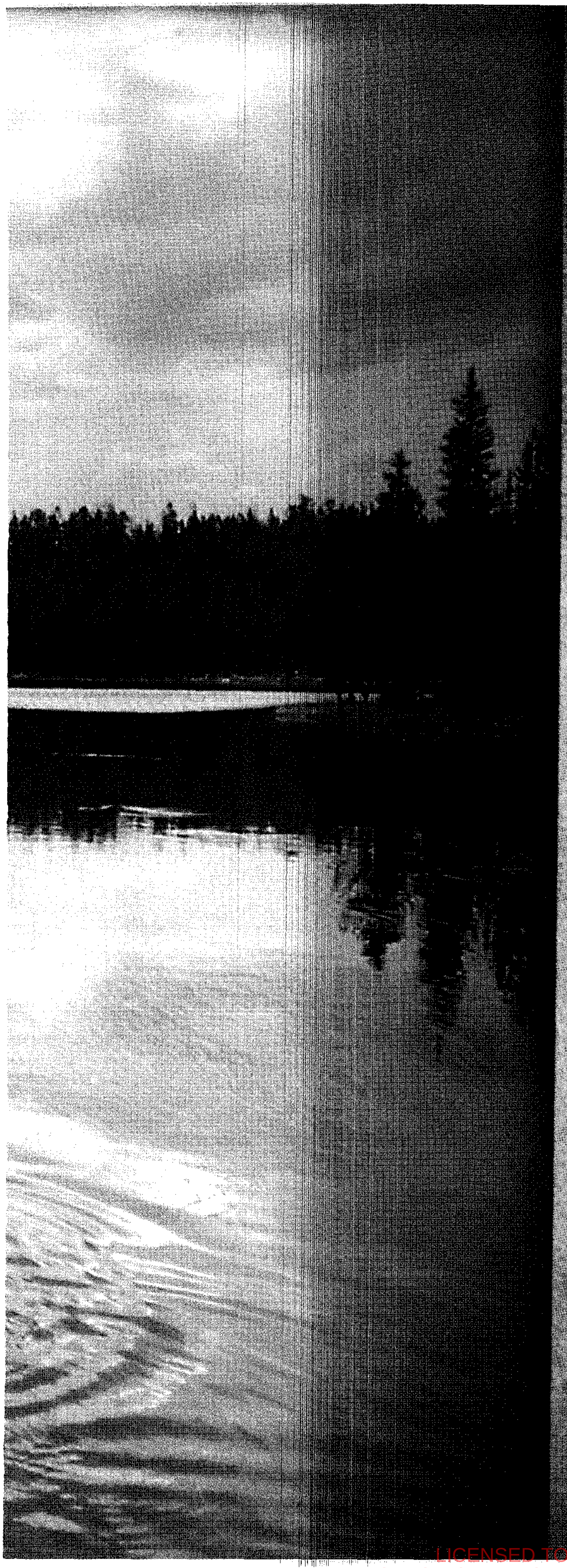
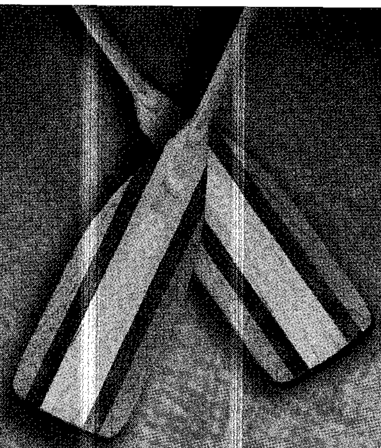

Rugged yes. Uncivilized no.





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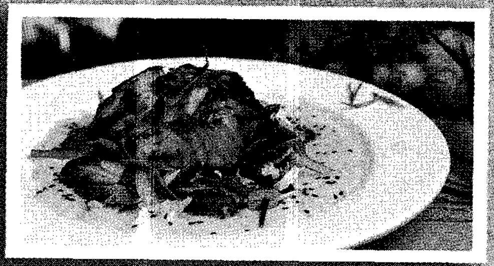

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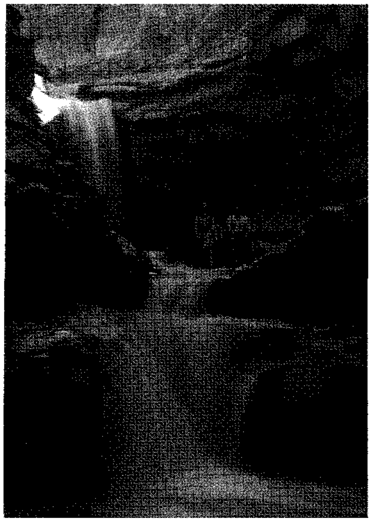

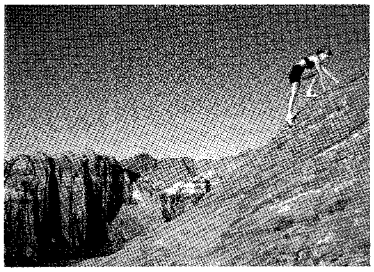

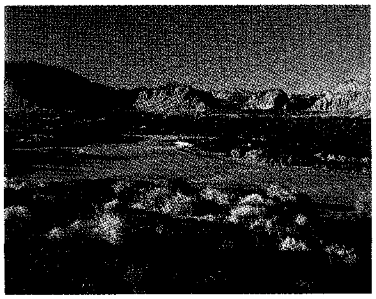

If time allows, and the soul is greedy, the 120-mile drive along **Highway 12 Scenic Byway** from Bryce to Capitol Reef offers a stunning prelude of red rock canyon and bone-white cliffs. In this less-visited park, named in part for the resemblance between its white sandstone domes and the one in Washington, you can "own" the scenery from a perch along the sinuous Fremont River or in a four-wheel drive that follows it on the road to Cathedral Valley.

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Sports enthusiasts pursue the snow to adrenaline-raising rapids on the Colorado River by driving southeast from Salt Lake City to **Moab**. The gateway to Arches and Canyonlands national parks, Moab, which sports the moniker, "mountain bike capital of the world," attracts the rugged-at-heart. Cyclists test their skills on slickrock at both parks and in Moab; offroad daredevils climb into the sky one wheel at a time in Moab and along designated routes in Canyonlands. Yet feet can be the best conveyance of awe, on a hike among the thousands of sandstone arcs in Arches or Horseshoe Canyon, a remote part of Canyonlands. Here, about a thousand years ago, human artists painted figures, perhaps self-portraits that endure, astonishingly, on the exposed canyon wall.

If you stay at the stylish **Sorrel River Ranch**, you can kayak on the 240-acre property's mile of Colorado River frontage and ride horses from its stables beneath the deep-red cliffs. Its spa offers soothing massages in a riverside pavilion, and its acclaimed River Grill Restaurant has its own smokehouse.

But if what you really crave is just to float, to let time slip away effortlessly, then the best invitation may be that of a luxury raft trip in Cataract Canyon with Sheri Griffith Expeditions. By day you have the thrills of white water and the seclusion of the scenery, and by night the relaxation of gourmet dinners with fine wine. This is a sojourn on the Colorado River that can make you feel at one with snow's flight of departure. This is how winter is forgotten and the sculpting of the future begins.

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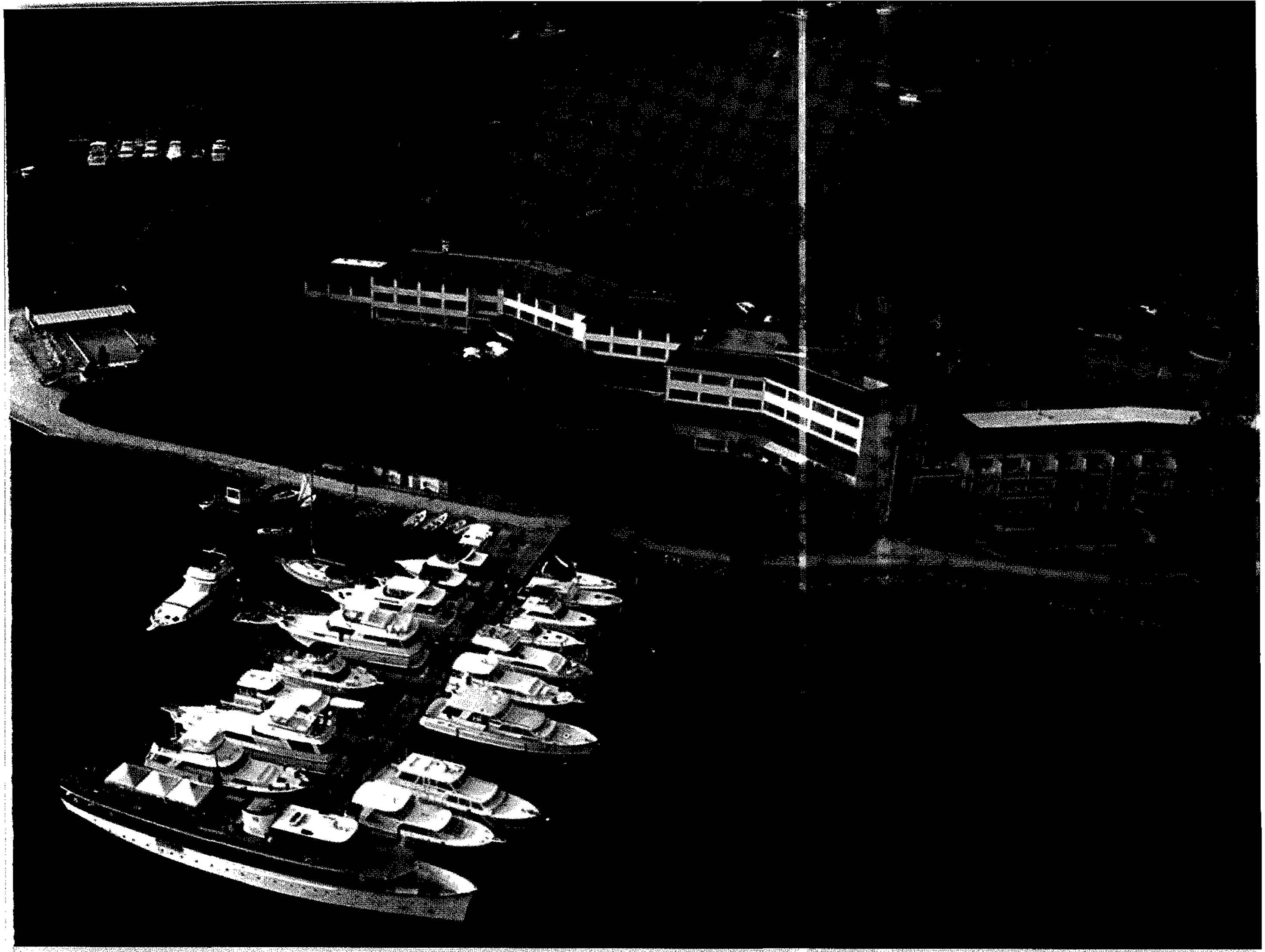

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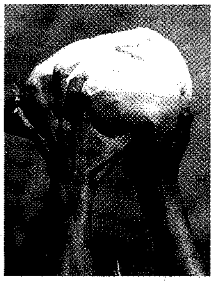
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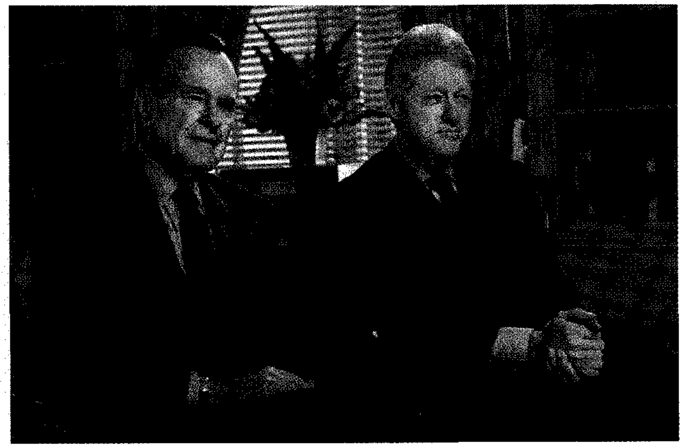
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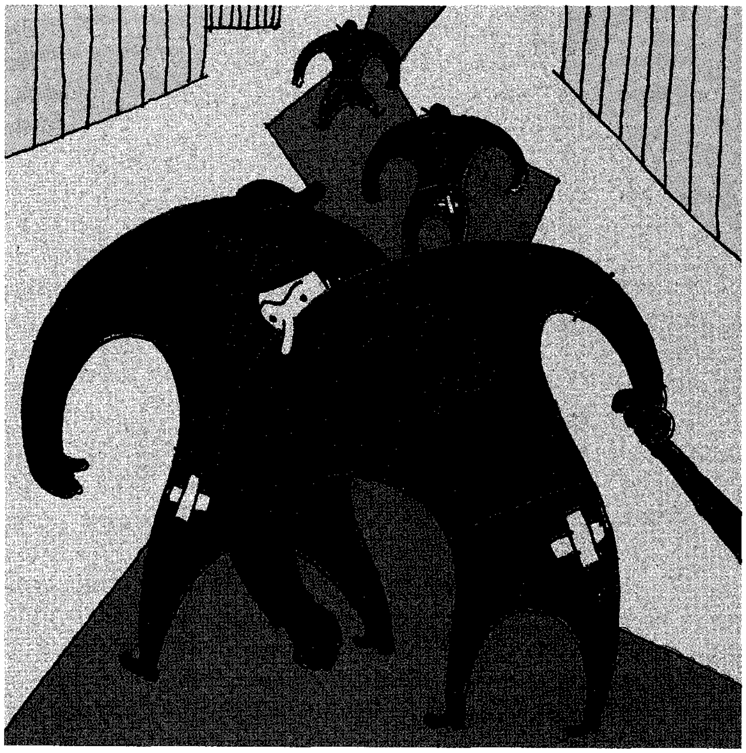
BOOKS

CLEANUP HITTERS

The steroid wars and the nature of what's natural.

BY STEVEN SHAPIN

One young man leads another to a toilet stall, cautiously looking around to make sure they're not being observed. Then he has him lower his trousers so that he can get at his buttocks. What follows is a matter of enormous public interest. Years later, President George W. Bush makes a speech condemning it. Congressional hearings are held to investigate it and to frame public policy.



Early in Canseco's steroid-fuelled career, he was dubbed "the Natural."

MARC ROSENTHAL

It is the summer of 1988; the toilets are in the home locker room of the Oakland Athletics; and Jose Canseco is injecting Mark McGwire with anabolic steroids. Or so Canseco recounts in "Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big" (Regan Books; $25.95). "It was really no big deal," Canseco writes. "We would just slip away, get our syringes and vials, and head into the bathroom area of the clubhouse to inject each other." By the late nineteen-nineties, according to Canseco, teammates were pairing off together in bathroom stalls with such regularity that it became an object of clubhouse drollery: "What are you guys, fags?"

Anabolic steroids are synthetic variants of such naturally occurring hormones as testosterone. They're called anabolic because they work in "constructive metabolism," during which simple materials provided to the gut or the bloodstream are built up into complex living tissue. Among the main effects that athletes want is a boost of skeletal muscle mass, and anabolic steroids help you get big fast. Canseco says he started doing anabolic steroids and growth hormone in 1985—the first baseball player to use steroids "in a serious way," he claims—and he put on twenty-five pounds of solid muscle in just a few months. More followed. McGwire grew massive, too, and he and Canseco became known as "the Bash Brothers."

Canseco explains that oil-based anabolic steroids require a large-gauge needle, so you have to be careful where you inject yourself. If you're a baseball player, you don't want to use your quad or calf muscles, because it may hamper your running, or your shoulder muscles, because you're doing a lot of throwing and catching. That leaves the buttocks. It takes a lot of practice to be able to do it yourself; when you start out, you need a little help from your friends. Once you become more accomplished, you can inject yourself, and then you'll want to become "an ambidextrous injector," he says, "because you definitely are going to want to hit both sides of your glute." (If you keep hitting the same spot, he warns, "it can get nasty.") Steroid use, as Canseco tells it, is itself a form of athleticism. Different steroids do different things: if you want just to build muscle mass, one sort will do; if you want to run fast, there are steroids to increase your fast-twitch muscle fibres. The congeries of body-building substances Canseco claims to have used includes Deca-Durabolin, Winstrol, Equipoise, and Anavar, as well as human growth hormone. He delightedly recalls that early in his steroid-fuelled career he was dubbed "the Natural."

Canseco writes that steroid use is no big deal, but he's wrong. President Bush made the remarkable decision to use his 2004 State of the Union address to denounce its dangers ("The use of performance-enhancing drugs like steroids in baseball, football, and other sports is dangerous, and it sends the wrong message—that there are shortcuts to accomplishment, and that performance is more important than character"). The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency sees it as a threat to sportsmanship ("Deterring the use of drugs in sport is necessary to preserve the integrity of sport in the United States"). The National Institute on Drug Abuse is alarmed at a range of irreversible side effects associated with steroid use by bodybuilding adolescents. There are fans who now wonder, say, whether there should be an asterisk by Barry Bonds's home-run record. And, of course, it's a criminal offense to possess anabolic steroids without a valid prescription.

Among the justifications for banning these substances are their side effects. For males, these may include breast development, atrophied testicles, and reduced sperm count, as well as baldness, severe acne, jaundice, tremors, an enlarged prostate, problems in liver and kidney function (with the possibility of tumor formation), hypertension, elevated risk of stroke and heart attack, and mood swings—the enhancement of masculine aggressiveness popularly known as " 'roid rage." When administered to adolescent bodies still in the course of development, steroids may cause permanently stunted growth; their use has been implicated in some teen-age suicides. Sentiment against steroid use also flows from a widespread sense of fair play and equity. The ideal of the level playing field translates broadly into the belief that all competitors should come to play with normal bodies, functioning normally.

So it may come as a surprise that "Juiced" celebrates steroid use as part of a new era of "clean living" in baseball, driving out alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, and even amphetamines—the "greenies" that Jim Bouton wrote about in "Ball Four," back in 1970. With the "trend toward better fitness that came with steroid use," Canseco maintains, "you saw bigger, stronger, faster, and *healthier* athletes, instead of those raggedy, run-down, pot-bellied ball players of previous eras." Steroid use among athletes has clearly aroused national passions, but passionate arousal isn't the ideal frame of mind for reasoned debate. Are the medical and moral evils of steroids in competitive sport really so unambiguous?

Nothing in "Juiced" suggests that Canseco was using steroids under a physician's care, or even on a doctor's advice. He seems to have had himself periodically checked out by doctors, but that's all. He was, instead, part of the great civic tradition condensed in the old motto "Every man his own physician." Canseco learned the techniques of steroid use by noticing how his own body reacted to the chemicals, and adjusting dosages and combinations accordingly. Yet steroid use also belongs to the history of mainstream modern medicine, and John Hoberman's excellent "Testosterone Dreams: Rejuvenation, Aphrodisia, Doping" (University of California; $24.95) tells much of the story of how and why steroids came to the pharmacy shelves.

In the late eighteen-eighties, a septuagenarian French physiologist named Charles-Édouard Brown-Séquard announced that he had been rejuvenated—and had the arc of his urine lengthened—by injecting himself with extracts from the sex glands of a dog and a guinea pig. Brown-Séquard's "organotherapy" created a considerable market for these crude extracts, and by the nineteen-tens the transplant of animal testicles and testicular extract was heralded as a treatment for homosexuals, who could thereby achieve an "energetic and manly aspect." But the real breakthrough came with the artificial production of androgenic and estrogenic hormones in the nineteen-thirties, especially the synthesis of testosterone in 1935. In testosterone, the medical profession saw hopes for restored virility and vigor, the extension of life, the cure for a range of disease, the management or elimination of sexual deviance, and enhanced performance in a variety of life functions. That year, *Newsweek* declared that the hormone could prevent "premature sterility and feminine characteristics in men."

In a familiar pattern, the transformation of previously "natural" features of human life into diseases marched in step with the trade in hormones: one medical historian calls them "drugs looking for diseases." Testosterone has, in recent years, been prescribed for "the andropause"—the decline in testosterone levels supposedly suffered by many men over sixty-five—and for women who consult doctors for low libido. Elder sex is completing the transition from deviance to embarrassment to a chemically assisted new normal. It's the pharmaceutical version of "If you build it, they will come," and you can find a parable to this effect in "Juiced." Canseco says that when he joined the Texas Rangers he introduced Rafael Palmeiro to steroids, and Palmeiro's newfound prowess on the field led to a lucrative deal to endorse Viagra.

So there has always been the thinnest of lines between medical augmentation and medical restoration. Is the task of the physician to maintain and restore normal function? If so, what is to count as normal? Or is it to enhance and release the full range of human potential? Hoberman plausibly predicts that "the future of testosterone drugs will evolve within the contest between [a] wide-open medical ethos"—one that approves medical interventions to enhance a range of life functions—"and our traditional sense that a well-lived life follows a natural trajectory from birth to death and that aging is a fate, not a disease."

Hormonal therapies lie right at the heart of these tensions, along with the chemical dosing of rambunctious kids, gastric-bypass surgery, and the more exotic forms of infertility medicine. Hoberman worries that "physicians who cater to patients' demands that are motivated by vanity or social fashion diminish the stature of practitioners by making them as much beauticians as healers." But who is to judge what pain is suffered by the obese or the wrinkled, not to mention the parents of aggressive and inattentive children? And who has the right to say which conditions you must live with and which you may mobilize the resources of chemical or surgical art to avoid?

The notion of what is normal—and, therefore, of what physicians may seek to restore and what they should leave untouched—isn't arbitrary, but neither is it unambiguous. A recent celebration of the biotechnological future, Ramez Naam's "More than Human: Embracing the Promise of Biological Enhancement" (Broadway Books; $24.95), points out that athletes' use of injectable erythropoietin (EPO) to boost their red-blood-cell count, and thus their endurance, may come to be replaced by some sort of gene therapy—a once-and-for-all introduction of the genes allowing individuals to produce a higher level of red blood cells as long as they live. Is it an unnatural result when it's produced by your own undrugged body?

When anti-doping organizations condemn steroids as a threat to the "integrity" of sport, they take a view about what should count as artificial enhancement and what as legitimate treatment. So it's worth noting that anabolic steroids not only helped Canseco turn into a home-run-hitting monster but also, he says, allowed him to recuperate from a

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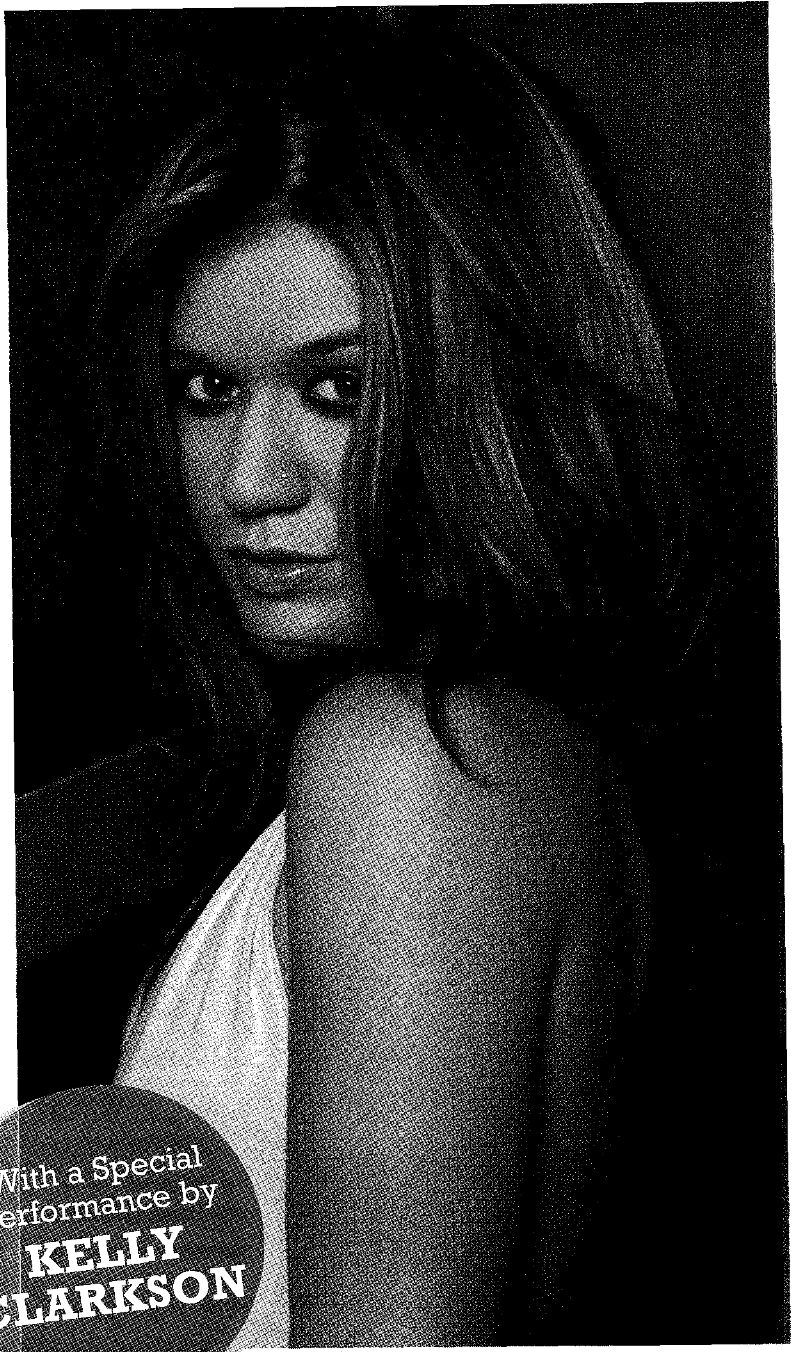

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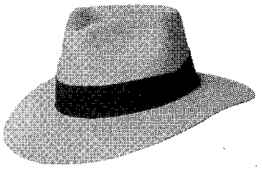

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series of back surgeries which could otherwise have ended his career. "I was on steroids and growth hormone," he recounts of his third surgery, "so I guess they accelerated the natural healing process."

There's overwhelming evidence that professional cycling, and particularly the Tour de France, is a chem lab on wheels, but even here the line between the augmentative and the recuperative use of drugs is deeply unclear. Scaling the Alpe d'Huez is painful, and rebounding from *hors catégorie* climbs to ride the next day calls for extraordinary recuperative powers. Is it unethical for a doctor to assist cyclists in managing that pain and restoring that extraordinary version of "normal" function which allows them to do their job? Physicians who make their living doing so can plausibly see themselves as healers. Spectators following the Tour de France seem to understand that. Even at the height of the doping revelations of 1998, the public continued to show their support for the cyclists. And one reason they did so was, as Hoberman says, "their appreciation of the physical ordeal the riders had to endure. Many ordinary people who depended on cigarettes, caffeine, or alcohol to make it through their days had no trouble sympathizing with men whose suffering could be read on their drawn and haggard faces."

In one way or another, we've always been juiced. When coffee and tea were new in the Western world, they were seen as powerful (and often dangerous) mind- and body-altering substances. The historical anthropologist Alan Macfarlane has recently argued for a causal link between the rise of British tea-drinking and the burst of physical energy that accompanied the Industrial Revolution. Opiated artists and coke-stoked musicians inspire both a tragic sense of damaged lives and a widespread appreciation of their chemically modified imagination and chemically managed psychic pain. And what do we say about the socially transformative effects of the steroidal birth-control pill? Do we put an asterisk next to the sexual revolution?

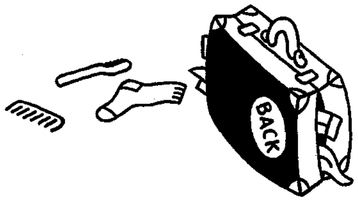
So the notion of the natural doesn't resolve the baseball issue; nor does the notion of harm or the notion of proper medical practice. The right question to ask is whether steroid use among competitive athletes is *fair*. To be sure, the definition of what's fair (as opposed to what's cheating) isn't any less contestable than the notion of what's normal. Nothing but shifting cultural preference lies behind our view that Lance Armstrong is not cheating if he sleeps in a pressure chamber to boost his red-blood-cell count but would be cheating if he used EPO; or our view that it's all right to use methylxanthines (the stimulants in coffee) but not ephedra. These are ethical matters, and although ethical judgments are historically changing and culturally variable, the conventions express who we are and what we value. We can't live without them. It's possible to imagine a future in which the medically supervised and regulated juicing of athletes will become the norm. (Even then, "natural" athletics would undoubtedly continue as a specialty taste, comparable to the organic-foods section in the supermarket.) But it's impossible to imagine any competitive sport or social practice in which some forms of advantage-seeking aren't defined as cheating and sanctioned accordingly. To complain that the rules are contingent and somewhat arbitrary is beside the point: games are the celebration of such rules. That's what makes them games.

It's a matter of debate what damage "proper" steroid use might cause to baseball players and other athletes, as is the precise extent of current use. Hoberman maintains that steroid use is the natural consequence of the hypercompetitiveness and performance anxiety of our entire culture, and, if he's right, steroids are the price we pay for the spectator goods we demand. I suspect the matter is more complicated than that. The public is perfectly aware that the demand for performance creates the conditions for cheating in sport, as it does for fraud in science or in bookkeeping. But at the same time much of the public holds cheaters accountable for succumbing to competitive pressure. We've now decided that steroid use crosses the line. Yes, we're the ones who drew that line, and we could have drawn it somewhere else. But what of it? To understand all is still not quite the same as to forgive all. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

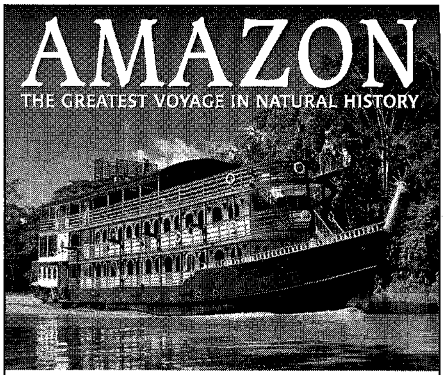
The Tomb in Seville, *by Norman Lewis (Carroll & Graf; $20).* Lewis, who died in 2003, at the age of ninety-five, was often described as the finest travel writer of the last century. In his final book, he revisits the material of his first one, a journey through Spain with his brother-in-law in 1934. It is a tale of two Spains: in the harsh terrain of the countryside, the friends are continually amazed by the extreme poverty and primitive existence of the peasants, many of whom still live in caves. Meanwhile, in the cities, skirmishes between Fascists and Reds, which later erupted into civil war, are already under way. In Atocha, where the travellers narrowly escape being mown down by machine-gun fire, they find the main café, amid the pandemonium, still open and busy. When their train pulls into Madrid, a gun battle is raging, and Lewis, taking cover, notes the words on a travel poster: "Under the Blue Skies of Spain Cares Are Forgotten."

The End of Elsewhere, *by Taras Grescoe (Serpent's Tail; $15.99).* "Travel writers tend to seek out the world's ever-diminishing pockets of authenticity," Grescoe writes, announcing his perverse decision to "make a point of going exactly where the tourist ruts have been plowed the deepest," by following itineraries that have become generic—the pilgrimage to Santiago (he walks *away* from Santiago, in order to meet more tourists), sex tourism in Thailand (as a non-participant), the Michelin-guided motor tour of provincial France. En route, he taxonomizes such tourist types as the "budget travel snob," and provides a gloriously trivia-strewn history of tourism. A bus tour of Europe leads to a discussion of the life of Thomas Cook, whose temperance outings grew into the world's first travel agency, while modern European rail-pass tours recall the Grand Tours of the eighteenth century, this ostensible goal of cultural enrichment providing a front for "unsupervised sex and boisterous partying."



Foreign Babes in Beijing, *by Rachel DeWoskin (Norton; $24.95).* DeWoskin's memoir takes its title from a popular Chinese soap opera in which she starred in the mid-nineties. Working for a P.R. firm in Beijing, she was approached by a producer at a party and was cast as Jiexi, a sexually liberated American girl who embodies China's simultaneous excitement at and nervousness about the spread of Western influence (she seduces a married Chinese man). DeWoskin's cleverly layered account thus charts parallel culture clashes, one that she experiences as a Western woman in modern China, and the other, a TV-ready version of the first, tailored to Chinese expectations. The daughter of a Sinologist, DeWoskin has considerable cultural and linguistic resources, allowing such insights as an implicit comparison between Jiexi and the wilder entries in "Biographies of Model Women," a two-thousand-year-old text of the Han Dynasty.

You Can't Get There from Here, *by Gayle Forman (Rodale; $23.95).* Forman's mistake, in this account of a year's globe-trotting with her husband, is to seek out self-consciously fringe topics—Tongan transvestites, Kazakh Tolkien nuts—in the hope that exoticism will prove enlightening. But her conclusions are so vapid ("Life, it turns out, is as big as you're willing to make it") as to call to mind Chesterton's quip that "travel narrows the mind." Like a voluble neighbor on a long flight, Forman tells us more about herself than we really want to know; a spat with her husband in the Far East makes one almost wish they'd break up for good. Elsewhere, though, she demonstrates a knack for getting interesting people to talk about themselves. The best chapter, set in the relatively unexotic world of Amsterdam's red-light district, examines the difficulties that legalization has brought. One madam complains of being forced to close because her ceilings were not of regulation height.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THE MANY FACES OF JANE

A one-woman show about the life of Djuna Barnes.

BY HILTON ALS

Of the many unforgettable roles that Jane Alexander has brought to life in her thirty-five years as a player on stage and screen, two stand out in particular. The first is her Oscar-nominated movie début as Eleanor Backman in Martin Ritt's 1970 adaptation of Howard Sackler's "The Great White Hope." (She won a Tony the year before for performing the same role on Broadway.) Alexander plays the lover of Jack Jefferson, a black prizefighter in the early years of the last century, who is closely modelled on the legendary Jack Johnson. Driven to extremes of frustration and rage by the racism that has held him back both inside and outside the ring, Jack finds himself, by the end of the movie, in an impossible situation: he loves Eleanor, but he can no longer bear to see her ostracized by her own people because of their interracial affair. So he decides to shut her out, in the hope that she will return to the presumed safety of her white world. After Jack has rejected her, Eleanor leaves his training studio and walks across the yard, Ritt's camera tracking her. She has no dialogue in this scene, but we see her mumbling to herself, her hair gone wild, the corners of her mouth turned down as she appears to go mad with grief and incomprehension. In that single moment, Alexander says all there is to say about the pain that we experience when the sacrifices we make in order to be loved turn out not to be enough.

Alexander has another moment of pure, silent emotional resonance in the haunting 1977 television movie "Eleanor and Franklin." Portraying Eleanor Roosevelt, in a scene in which she has just learned of her husband's liaison with her secretary and close friend, Lucy Mercer, she sits in a cool white bedroom, her dark-brown hair pinned above her pale, intelligent forehead, facing a mirror but not looking at her reflection. Visible in her expression are both the future President's stalwart defender and the spurned lover, who still sees herself as a lonely, homely girl.

Alexander has always been especially good in roles that allow her to be conflicted about her stature as a lover, a wife, or a mother. She conveys pathos through her attachments to complicated men living in a morally compromised world. She is her generation's Anne Revere: unsmiling but optimistic in the face of evils that would overwhelm a woman who lacked her Yankee backbone and thorny Puritan streak.

Perhaps no other modernist explored the dark, twisting forces of love as deeply as Djuna Barnes (1892-1982), who is the subject of the one-woman show "What of the Night" (an M.C.C. production at the Lucille Lortel). The author of the much admired novel "Nightwood," the short-story collection "Spillway," and a mordant book of poems and drawings, "The Book of Repulsive Women," among other works, Barnes was an expatriate journalist and writer living in bohemian Paris in the twenties, where she frequented the same circles as Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Man Ray, and the other members of Hemingway's "moveable feast." It was in Paris that Barnes fell in love with the difficult Thelma Wood, who became the basis for Robin, the terrible and incandescent love object in "Nightwood." (After a series of breakups and breakdowns, Wood and Barnes separated permanently in 1930.) In 1940, Barnes left Europe and settled into an apartment in Greenwich Village, where she lived in near-seclusion for the rest of her life. That apartment serves as the setting for "What of the Night," which has been sensitively, if perhaps too abstractly, adapted from Barnes's work and her biography by Alexander, Noreen Tomassi, and the director Birgitta Trommler.

At the start of the play, a scrim separates the audience from the stage; on the screen, typewritten letters glow. The letters don't form words; they are simply the linguistic fragments that one needs in

Jane Alexander provides a window into the mysterious, arduous art of performing. Photograph by Max Vadukul.

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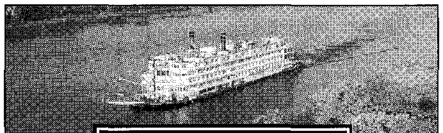

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order to make language happen. Barnes is at the end of her life—she is done with language, or so she says. "No more novels, no plays, no poems," she insists. (Alexander, as the aged Barnes, uses her voice to particularly fine effect; she gets the transatlantic locution just right.) Barnes goes on, "No laurels for old friends, no eulogies, not even a postcard. No one gets another line. You think I'm bored? Hah! Every day is an assault and I am always on high alert." Actually, Barnes hasn't stopped writing—she can't stop; she even composes poetry on her grocery lists—but she can't seem to get past her own egotism long enough to make her words matter to anyone else.

Instead, she looks back into memory, primarily her memories of Paris, which means memories of her lover Thelma. (Alexander plays all the roles here, and she is better at some than at others.) Casting off the long, dark velvet coat that she wears as the older Barnes, Alexander reveals a light-gray suit underneath. She pushes her hair back, straightens her posture, and suddenly she is a young woman, singing "Parlez-Moi d'Amour." As Thelma, Alexander stands center stage, basking in the glow of self-love. Like many people who assume that they are desired, Thelma is contemptuous of those who love her. She would respect Barnes more if she treated her with disdain. The most successful dramatic moment in the play is a scene adapted from "Nightwood." Djuna and Thelma—or, rather, their fictional stand-ins, Nora and Robin—take a walk through the louche neighborhoods of Paris and encounter a woman begging for money to buy a drink. Robin, a drinker herself, becomes fixated on the woman, engaging her in a dialogue in which she ridicules Nora and Nora's attempts to "save" her. Nora retaliates with a slap. "Out of weariness and misery, I struck her," she explains. "And at that, she started, and smiled, and went up the stairs with me without complaint. She sat up in bed and ate eggs and called me, 'Angel! Angel!' " Alone onstage, Alexander brings all three characters vividly to life. As they drink from the same gutter of misbegotten love, it becomes clear that this is not the City of Light; it is the city of perpetual night.

"What of the Night" is limited, however, by the absence of Barnes's famously Grand Guignol humor. The writers of the script revere their subject too much, and thus place themselves in the ranks of the scholars and feminists whom Barnes herself rejected. "Don't leave anything at my door," Barnes says in the show. "Weeping lesbians with your flowers, mushy novels . . . I will not read them." Without that sense of comedy, Alexander's portrait of Barnes lacks the immediacy of, say, Elizabeth Bishop's account of the poet Marianne Moore running into Barnes during one of her rare forays into the outside world. Bishop writes, in a 1969 essay, "I was curious and asked her what Djuna Barnes was 'like.' There was rather a long pause before Marianne said, thoughtfully, 'Well . . . she looked very smart, and her shoes were *beautifully* polished.' " It's clear that Alexander and her collaborators didn't want to embellish the facts of Barnes's life. But theatre demands invention. For Barnes to capture our imagination outside her books, the authors and the director need to do so as well; instead, they have opted for hollow hagiography.

Had the producers of the current revival of Ernest Thompson's 1979 hit "On Golden Pond" (at the Cort) been a little more adventurous, they might have cast Alexander in the role of Ethel, opposite James Earl Jones's Norman. It was Jones, of course, who played Jack Jefferson in "The Great White Hope," and Alexander would have brought a strong, purposeful clear-sightedness to the part. Leslie Uggams, who takes on the role here, is wonderful to watch, too—she's a more strident Melba Moore—but in her performance you hear only the gags and miss the play's underlying theme: that life with "an old poop," as she calls her husband, may be taxing, but marriage is built on acceptance, not judgment.

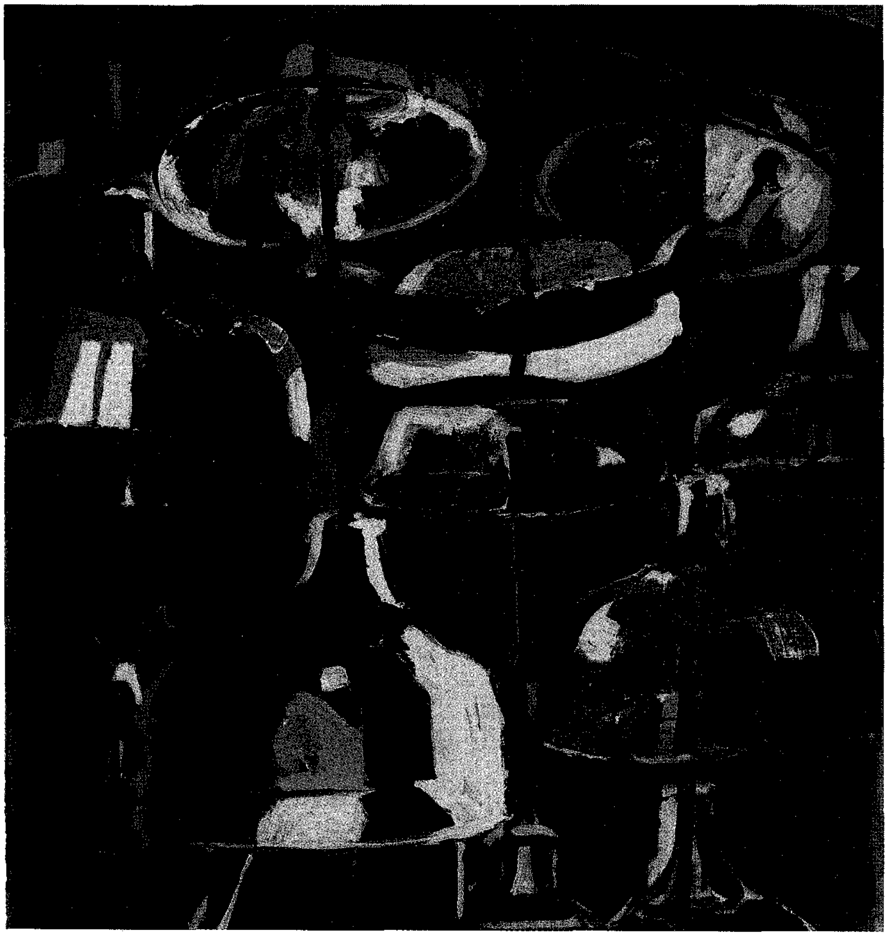
Everything about "On Golden Pond" works just a little too neatly: the plot; the characters; the jokes; the set, by Ray Klausen; the direction, by Leonard Foglia; and the actors. As Norman, a retired professor who has kept his daughter, Chelsea (Linda Powell), at a distance for years, Jones is charming. He finds nuances in a role that could easily be played with none. Like Alexander, he keeps making it new. And, by doing so, both actors provide a window into the mysterious, arduous art of performing, even when their performances are, alas, far superior to the material they have to work with. ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

OFF THE RAILS

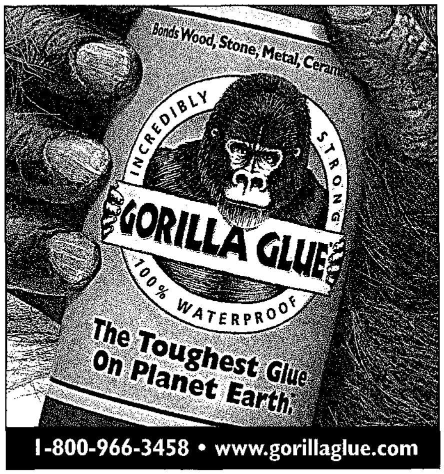
A rare performance of Harry Partch's "Oedipus."

BY ALEX ROSS



Among Partch's homemade instruments are Pyrex containers from a radiation lab.

Of all the triumphantly weird characters who have roamed the frontiers of American art, none ever went quite as far out as the composer Harry Partch. His exit from civilization has assumed the status of legend, and it's all true. The turning point in Partch's life came in 1935, after he spent six months travelling through Europe on a grant. He was thirty-four years old; his explorations of new tunings and instruments had aroused smatterings of interest. In the hope of making an opera from William Butler Yeats's adaptation of Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex," he had met with the poet in Ireland, and had received his blessing. But few others grasped what Partch was after, and when he returned to the United States he couldn't summon the will to beg for more money. Instead, he decided to drop out, and it wasn't your feel-good hippie kind of dropping out. He spent much of the next eight years living as a hobo—riding trains, doing manual labor, sleeping in shelters or in the wild, contracting syphilis, working occasionally as a proofreader, and, all the while, rethinking every parameter of music. One day in 1940, while passing through Barstow, California, Partch found some graffiti along a highway, and he saw in it what no one else could have seen, material for a rasping, pugnacious song: "It's January 26. I'm freezing. / Ed Fitzgerald. Age 19. Five feet ten inches. / Black hair,



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brown eyes. / . . . I wish I was dead. / But today I am a man."

Partch, whose "Oedipus" recently had a run of performances in Montclair, New Jersey, was destined to be different. He was born in Oakland in 1901, and spent much of his childhood in the lonely railway outpost of Benson, Arizona. At the age of eighteen, he moved to Los Angeles, where he studied music at U.S.C. One pivotal early experience was his romance with the actor Ramón Samaniego, whom he met when both were ushers at the L.A. Philharmonic. Samaniego ended the affair shortly after becoming Ramon Novarro, the silent-screen idol. That disappointment helped cement Partch's determination to reject the mainstream. He could be difficult, and, with enough alcohol in his system, impossible. But there was something incorrigibly pure about him. Yeats said he was "very simple," and did not mean it as an insult.

Early on, Partch started asking himself why there were twelve notes in the Western scale. Reading the history of tuning, he paid special attention to the theories of Pythagoras and other ancient Greeks, who codified the relationship between elemental harmonies and vibrating strings. (If you pinch the midpoint of a rubber band tuned to C and then pluck it, the tone goes up to the next higher C. At a third of the length, the tone rises to a G. With fractions of a fourth and a fifth, you get another C, then an E. Together, these notes spell a lovely major chord.) Since the early nineteenth century, Western music has been tuned according to the equal-temperament system, which adjusts the neat Greek ratios in order to create a standardized scale. Partch wanted to restore the eerie "rightness" of the old tunings. At the same time, he added minute gradations, or microtones, until he had a forty-three-tone scale, each interval controlled by ratios of integers.

He summarized his thinking in a 1949 book entitled "Genesis of a Music," which begins with the most startling forty-five-page history of music ever written. The art really began to go downhill, we're told, when Johann Sebastian Bach got his grubby fingers on it. Partch held Bach responsible for two trends: (1) the movement toward equal-tempered tuning, which meant that composers could not absorb the scales of other world traditions; and (2) the urge to make music ever more instrumental and abstract. Although Bach advocated neither of these things, Partch's critique of the long-term denaturing of music still packs a punch.

The irony is that Partch himself was sometimes suspected of being a professional originator, a paper genius who tried to write his way into history with outré gestures. In fact, he invented his forty-three-tone scale not to inflict another system on the world but to allow for a new style of vocal setting that followed the contours of the speaking voice. In his insistence on reuniting song and word, he mirrored another outlying genius of twentieth-century music, Leoš Janáček, whose notations of the music of speech bear a fascinating resemblance to Partch's hobo travelogue "Bitter Music," minus the nude drawings. If Partch wanted "to find a way *outside*," as he once said, he also wanted to find his way back, to a ritualistic, bardic art. On this point, he and Yeats—not the gay-hobo type—understood each other perfectly.

Perhaps the most impractical, and charmingly quixotic, aspect of Partch's project was that it could be realized only on instruments that he himself had constructed. Starting in the thirties, he hammered together an orchestra of strings, keyboards, and percussion. The Instrumentarium, as it is known, faced an uncertain fate after Partch's death, in 1974; his following resembled a scattered, disorganized cult. Six years ago, the instruments found a home at Montclair State University, under the care of the composer Dean Drummond. The collection includes adaptations of familiar instruments—viola, guitar, reed organ—along with resonating objects that double as dramatic sculpture: the Cloud-Chamber Bowls, which consist of Pyrex carboys that Partch obtained from the Berkeley Radiation Laboratory; the Kithara, modelled on a harplike instrument seen on Greek vases; and the Marimba Eroica, whose lowest notes are produced by five-foot-high blocks that the percussionist must stand on a riser in order to play. Made of redwood, spruce, bamboo, and rosewood, the instruments look as awesome as they sound.

The stylish new Kasser Theatre, on the Montclair campus, hopes to become a center for next-wave programming, a BAM

West. With this production of "Oedipus," it succeeds. The staging was by members of New York's Ridge Theatre group: the director Bob McGrath, the filmmaker Bill Morrison, and the visual designer Laurie Olinder. The action is split between the mythic world and the sitting room of Sigmund Freud, who is psychoanalyzing the title character. Morrison's films draw on old Austrian newsreels, including slow-motion shots of the funeral of Chancellor Dollfuss. As in other Ridge productions, such as "Everyday Newt Burman" and "Decasia," the images summon an atmosphere of worlds in decline, of ancient terrors surfacing. The superb cast included Robert Osborne, as Oedipus; Beth Griffith, as Jocasta; and David Ronis, as the Spokesman (a.k.a. Freud). Daniel Keeling made Tiresias a mad preacher, with a bit of Ray Charles thrown in. Drummond led the Newband ensemble in a virtuosic performance.

What of the music itself? It is staggeringly strange, but also achingly beautiful. Partch said that his "Oedipus" should achieve "emotional saturation, or transcendence," and, by gods, it does. It begins slowly, with the bigger instruments held in reserve and long stretches of the play delivered as straight dialogue—in ersatz Yeats, because the poet's estate stupidly withheld permission for Partch to use the original. Then the screws begin to turn. The chorus of women sings winding laments that devolve into wordless cries; the cello unfolds fragments of another long, dark song; the Marimba Eroica emits its mind-bending basement tones; tribalistic dances and sonic rave-ups take over; and, amid the fog of microtones, pure Pythagorean consonances appear like ghosts. The climax is Oedipus' interrogation of the Herdsman, during which he discovers the awful truth. The simplicity of Partch's method—sending words into the listener's brain along all musical channels—creates hair-raising tension, an aria of the uncanny.

At one point, I wondered why Oedipus' voice kept swooping up and down in singsong patterns. Had Partch really stayed true to his philosophy of speech-like song? Then I remembered what I'd read in Bob Gilmore's biography of the composer—that the model for the music was Yeats's voice, chanting lines like "For death is all the fashion now, till even Death be dead." ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

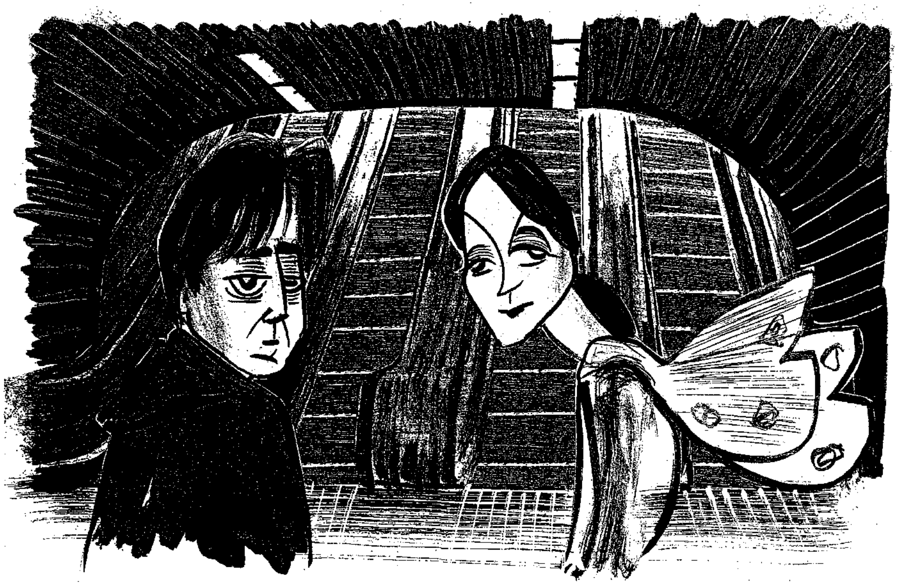
TRACK AND FIELD

"Kontroll," and "Fever Pitch."

BY DAVID DENBY

"Kontroll," the raucous and tender first film by the young Hungarian-American director Nimród Antal, is set entirely in the Budapest subway. You could say that the movie is colored by subway moods: a grim sort of listlessness and deadpan wit alternating with spasmodic fits of activity and rage; the pallor of flesh seen under humming neon and fluorescent light, a pallor darkened, at times, with blood. Antal's heroes are a mangy bunch of ticket inspectors, who patrol the trains and platforms asking passengers to show their tickets or pay in cash. The Budapest subway, it seems, is run on the honor system, which many people in the city regard as a joke. A few passengers pay, but others walk away from the inspectors, or spit at them, or curse and rough them up. Authority figures without authority, the ticket inspectors seem to attract the city's crazies: a pimp who noisily offers a girl in place of the fare; a hag in Gypsy dress who blows talcum powder in one man's face. In response to the constant battering, the inspectors have become wild eccentrics, manic depressives, and brawlers; they work in teams, and then the teams, pumping themselves up like rival street gangs, pick ridiculous quarrels or stage lunatic competitions, like a race on the tracks at closing time, with a train (the last express) coming up hard behind the runners. "Kontroll" draws on the tropes of American genre pulp, but the style is far from the glib brilliance of a comic-book movie like "Sin City," which is a technical marvel and a dramatic disaster. Antal has concocted a phantasmagoria—outlandish and jumpy—but, at the same time, the movie is three-dimensional and weighted, with a melancholy soulfulness that becomes surprisingly touching.

Antal, who is thirty-one, was born in Los Angeles to Hungarian parents; in his late teens, he escaped California and went to film school in Budapest. He made commercials and music videos there before "Kontroll," and he seems to have soaked up Fellini and the recent past of filmmaking. His picture has a grimy, hallucinatory look that draws on the work of such directors as Scorsese, Terry Gilliam, David Fincher, and the George Miller who made "The Road Warrior." But Antal has a mordancy that is all his own. Perhaps "Kontroll" is best described as an example of American rhythm and pace wedded to a European sensibility—a temperament that tends, for all its dynamism, toward the forlorn, the sardonic, the contemplative. Working without digital painting of any sort (the budget was eight hundred thousand dollars), Antal and his cinematographer, Gyula Pados, sustain moods of foreboding and mad exhilaration mainly through camera movement and lighting. Much of "Kontroll" plays against darkness; the blacks are very black, pushed into obscurity by selective tinting of the film stock, and the light has a kind of glaring aggressiveness that at first is hard to take. Watching the color palette, you feel as if you'd been banged on the head and were struggling to attain consciousness—everything is a bit off, darker or lighter than life, and the clangorous rock score, by NEO, adds to the disorientation. Yet, by the end, the movie seems quite beautiful. You can get used to subway vision.



Sándor Csányi as a ticket inspector and Eszter Balla as a subway driver's daughter.

TOM BACHTELL

Bulcsú (Sándor Csányi), the leader of the most likable team of inspectors, emerges from the darkness with a face drained of color. A large-bodied, handsome, intelligent guy, Bulcsú refuses to go aboveground. At night, he roams the tunnels, and he sleeps on the platforms like a bum. During working hours, as the lights mysteriously flicker on and off, Bulcsú and his crew walk down endless corridors or eat unspeakable food in some dour underground café. The movie has the look of science fiction and reality at the same time: there's a complete world down there below the street, ancient and gnarled (the Budapest subway is the oldest on the European continent), yet bizarrely alive. Some of the denizens may be trolling through the maze like the undead, but others are more hyper than normal people; all of them are battening off the foul air. An enormous escalator, lit like a stairway to Heaven, beckons, but some of them don't get on it. Instead, they stage a costume ball on a platform—a goofy Walpurgisnacht.

This is a fantasia made with fresh, happy exuberance—you can feel the director's glee at being given free run of the place, with no one to stop him from trying out his wildest ideas. (The movie was shot after hours.) When Bulcsú's

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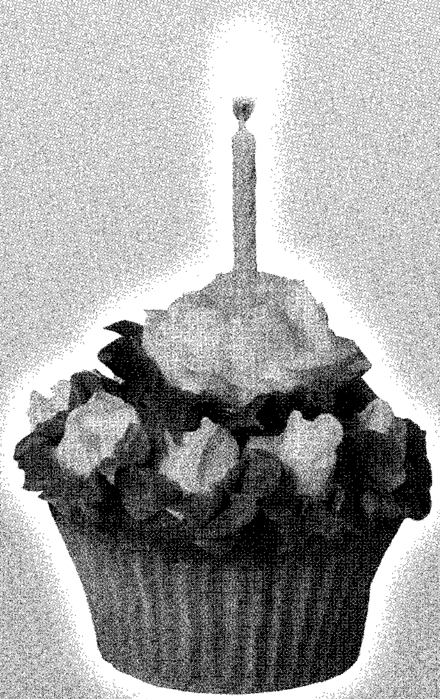

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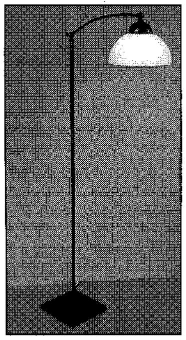

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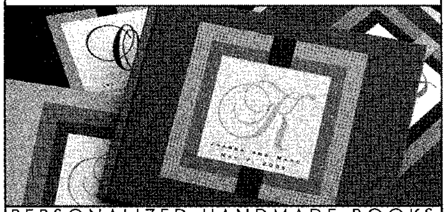

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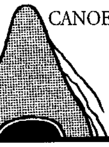

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team sees an athletic, crazy teen-ager known as Bootsie, who has the habit of spraying shaving cream into people's faces, they take off after him, and the camera races along like a jackrabbit, running through crowds, dodging around steel columns. Antal and Pados are virtuosos with the camera, but the movie would amount to little more than an exercise in technique if the actors did not project so much emotion into their roles. This young director appears to have used every hip performer he could find in the Budapest theatre and club scenes. The actors have strong faces; each one creates a character. On Bulcsú's team, there's Zoltán Mucsi as Professor, an acidulous old guy with the baleful look of a country parson, and Csaba Pindroch, as tall as an exclamation point, playing Muki the narcoleptic, who works himself into Gene Wilder-type fits and then suddenly faints dead away. Some of the best moments come when Bulcsú and his crew just sit around, ragging each other; even in these fantastic circumstances, people have to find some sort of insult humor to get them through the day.

What *is* this movie? Fable, expressionist circus, corrosive Magyar joke? Antal has combined the actual life of the subway with its tall tales and paranoid myths. You can't take "Kontroll" literally, nor are you meant to. But the shape of the story is suggestive. We find out that Bulcsú, in his earlier, aboveground life, was some sort of architect or city planner who couldn't stand competing all the time and gave up. Like Marlon Brando in his early roles, he's a man too big for his situation, a prince hiding among commoners. He's indifferent to what happens to him until he gets taken in hand by a lovely girl, Sofie (Eszter Balla), the daughter of an alcoholic but gentle train driver. Sofie seems to be an angel of some sort, and her father, who tells terrible jokes, may be a sweet-tempered god. She leads Bulcsú to the lair of a hooded figure who has been pushing people onto the tracks before onrushing trains—Death itself, claiming stray passengers for some unknown netherworld. If you wanted to be fancy, you could, I suppose, call "Kontroll" an allegory of existence in purgatory. Will Bulcsú lick Death, give up his half-life as a ghoulish wanderer, and get on the escalator? "Kontroll" has cultish mystifica-

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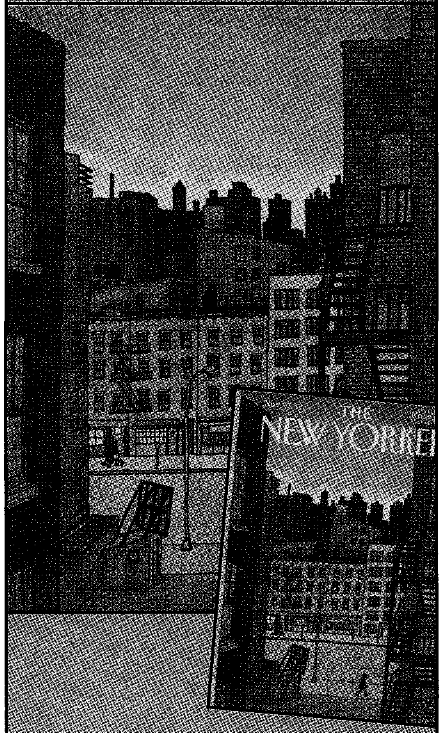

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tions that I might object to if the movie weren't so fully felt. This vibrant film makes a vintage midnight favorite like "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" look arch and tame. There must be a lot of smart people out there in America ready for a youthful explosion of talent and temperament. This is their picture.

The Farrelly Brothers' "Fever Pitch," which was loosely adapted from a Nick Hornby memoir by the writing team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is a conventional romantic comedy that plugs into something curious. Jimmy Fallon, formerly of "Saturday Night Live," is Ben, a joke-happy Boston schoolteacher who successfully woos a high-flying corporate consultant played by Drew Barrymore. Looking very sleek, Barrymore is the most adorably earnest of comediennes; she enunciates her feelings with great care, as if responsibility to her lover and herself depended on working things out precisely. Fallon, by contrast, is vague and semi-articulate, and dances around her. Ben can't keep his mind on his terrific girlfriend; his mind is on the Red Sox. He is one of Boston's obsessed. His house is a Sox museum and mausoleum, down to the Yankee toilet paper, and he spends his summers in a field-level box seat passed down from his uncle, surrounded by fans who have been muttering the same curses and masochistic riffs for decades. The fans are like peasants in a defeated province; they revile their conquerors and revile themselves almost as much for being defeated. The filmmakers are uncertain whether Sox obsession is lovably funny or disastrously infantile—for Ben, the Sox are more important than sex, than love, than children. The movie's one moment of superior clarity is a scene in which Ben and his friends go to a restaurant in misery after a bitter loss, only to see three Sox players dining there, enjoying themselves at the end of a hard but extremely remunerative day's work. The rest of "Fever Pitch" has a slapdash feeling to it. The movie was plotted against the 2004 season, and the filmmakers, shooting through the summer, had to pull off an abrupt rewrite when the Sox did not do their customary slide but roared past the Yankees and the Cardinals and became champs. Sox fans, in their deserved ecstasy, will no doubt forgive the Farrelly Brothers an idiotic scene in which Barrymore, in a burst of Sox loyalty and love, jumps out of the stands and runs across the field with half the stadium police in pursuit. But the time for such desperate gestures may be over. Having passed from the grandeur of eternal loss to the banality of success, Sox fans will have to confront ordinary life like the rest of us. ♦

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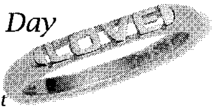

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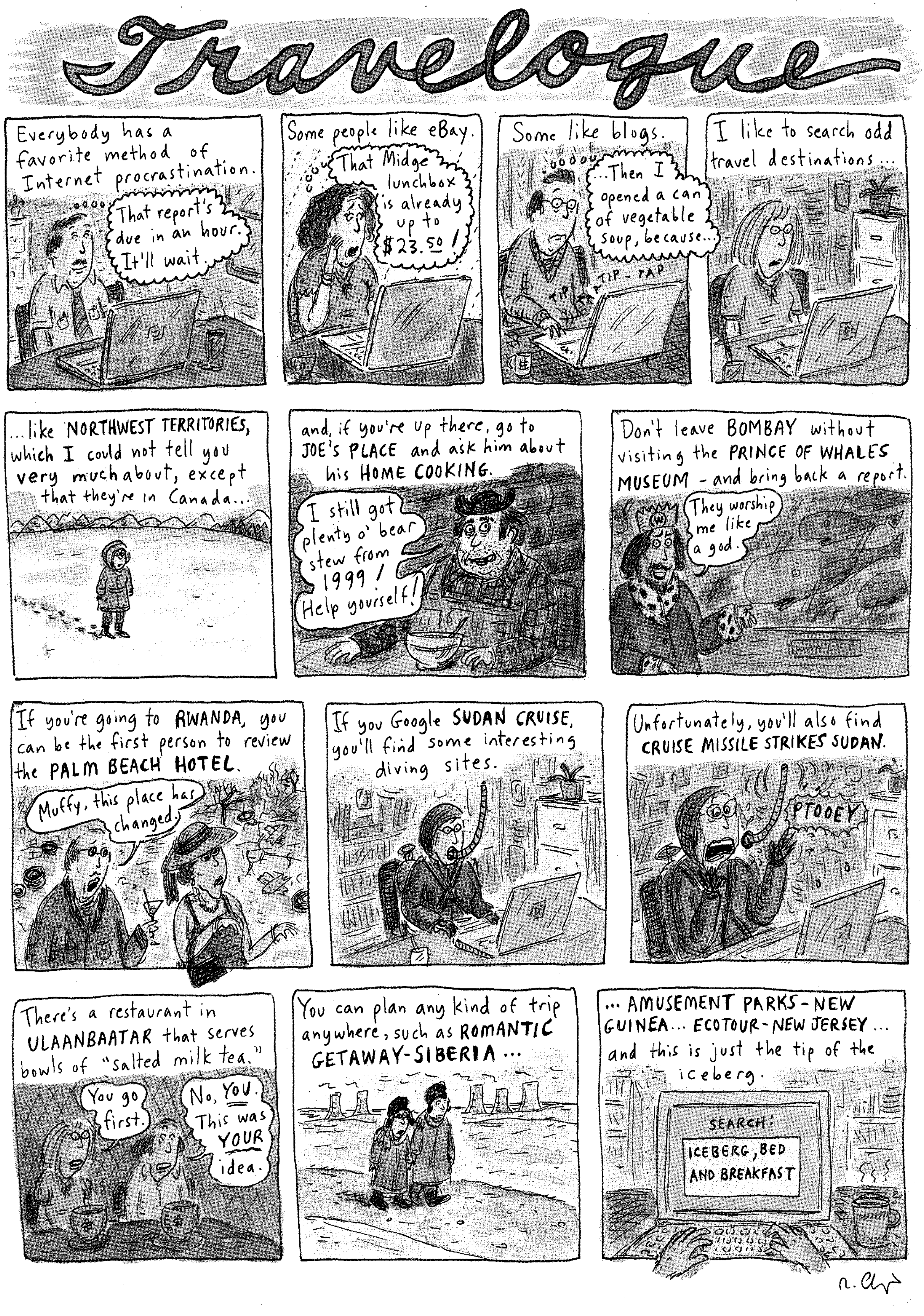
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